



Phase 1 Report – 2007

March, 2008

Dear Friends of Delaware Stars,

Phase 1 – 2007 was an extraordinarily successful year for Delaware Stars for *Early Success*, the state’s new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early care and education. This success was due in large part to a productive public-private partnership; significant financial support; and valuable input from participating programs, technical assistants, and advisory groups. As you read this report, it is important to understand that Delaware Stars could not have realized such a positive beginning without these contributions. We want to say, “Thank you!”

Delaware Stars is structured as a public-private partnership. The development and implementation of the system has been guided by the considerable expertise of representatives from the Department of Education, Office of Early Care and Education and Delaware First; the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services; the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Office of Child Care Licensing; the Delaware Early Childhood Council; The Family & Workplace Connection, a division of Children and Families First; and United Way Success by 6™. Delaware Stars benefitted from this team approach.

Financial support is critical to the success of any quality improvement initiative. Delaware Stars wishes to acknowledge the state departments and private entities that funded this effort in 2007:

- Department of Education
- Department of Health and Social Services, Divisions of Social Services and Public Health
- United Way
- Astra Zeneca
- JP Morgan Chase
- Social Venture Partners – Delaware

The programs and technical assistants involved in Phase 1 gave of their time and shared their Delaware Stars experience to help us “test” the system. They identified areas that needed attention, helping Stars to make adjustments that will benefit those programs that participate in Delaware Stars as it moves forward. A list of the 2007 programs and technical assistants can be found at the end of the report. Delaware Stars appreciates their feedback and suggestions.

Again, Delaware Stars wants to thank all those who contributed to the success of Phase 1 and demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of early care and education for Delaware’s young children and their families.

Candace deCsipkes
Delaware Stars Manager

Delaware Stars for *Early Success*
Phase 1 – 2007
Report Summary

- I. Background:** Delaware Stars is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) aimed at increasing access to quality early care and education for all of Delaware’s children. It is part of Delaware’s plan for early care and education – *Early Success*. It is a public-private partnership between the state Departments of Education, Health and Social Services, and Services for Children, Youth and Their Families; The Family & Workplace Connection, a division of Children and Families First; and United Way Success by 6™. In 2005, at the direction of the Delaware Early Childhood Council, quality standards were developed with input from the early childhood community. In 2007 Delaware Stars began to “test” the system with 15 programs – Phase 1. Funding in 2007 came from the Department of Education, Department of Health and Social Services, United Way, JP Morgan Chase, Social Venture Partners – Delaware, and Astra Zeneca.
- II. Brief Description of Delaware Stars:** Delaware Stars is a five level system, with the lowest level requiring programs to meet licensing rules. Programs work to move up the levels, meeting increasingly higher quality standards in the following areas: Qualifications & Professional Development, Learning Environment & Curriculum, Family & Community Partnerships, and Management & Administration. Delaware Stars provides participating programs with technical assistance and limited financial support.
- III. Phase 1 Programs:** 15 programs, serving 1,083 children, participated in Phase 1 – 8 small centers (6 or fewer classrooms), 4 large centers, 2 family child care homes, and 1 large family child care home. Two centers are school-age only programs and one center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) which means it enters at Star level 5 and does not go through the quality improvement process. These programs serve infants, toddlers, preschool-age children, school-age children, children with special needs, and children whose primary language is other than English (not all programs serve all categories of children). Twelve of the fifteen programs serve children and families receiving Purchase of Care (POC). POC is Delaware’s child care subsidy program, serving children and families who live within 200% of the federal poverty limit. While programs do not collect information about the income levels of all families, many families served by these programs fit into the definition of moderate income. All three counties were represented.
- IV. Program Supports**
- Awards and Grants:** 13 programs received Quality Improvement Grants for a total of \$12,025. These grant funds were used to pay for education and training needed to meet qualifications, to purchase books and materials to support child assessment and curriculum planning standards, and to purchase materials for financial record-keeping. Six programs received Professional Development Support Grants, which supported 28 staff, for a total of \$6,986.
- Technical Assistance:** Ten technical assistants provided 678.25 hours of support to Phase 1 programs at a rate of \$40 per hour (plus mileage in some cases) for a total cost of \$25,053. Technical assistants also provided Delaware Stars required training at a total cost of \$4,470.
- Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment:** Delaware Stars assessed the Star Level 5 accredited program with the ERS, a nationally recognized tool, at a cost of \$1,000.
- V. What Did We Learn in Phase 1?:** Stars gathered information from its database; from surveys, interviews and meeting discussions with programs and technical assistants; and from advisory groups.
- General:** Fourteen of the fifteen programs were overwhelmingly positive about their involvement in Delaware Stars. They reported that their staff was better qualified and trained, that they addressed program weaknesses and became better organized, and that families were more informed. Programs did mention the significant amount of time involved in the quality improvement process.

Standards: Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) most often included standards focused on staff qualifications and the Delaware Stars required training. In addition, standards that require programs to write and implement certain policies and procedures were challenging – transition, inclusion, Code of Ethics, confidentiality, program goals for children, and using children’s goals in lesson planning.

All programs started the quality improvement process at Star Level 1, primarily due to difficulty meeting qualifications and training requirements. In 2007, six of the 14 programs moved to Star Level 2; the others continue to work on achieving Star Level 2.

The Star Level 5 accredited program did quite well on the Environment Rating Scale assessment, but not quite high enough to meet Delaware’s Star Level 5 standard.

Programs and technical assistants reported that the required training had the most significant positive impact on quality, particularly training about the Environment Rating Scale and the Early Learning Foundations, Delaware’s standards for young children’s learning experiences.

Process/Paperwork: The paperwork seemed overwhelming. Programs requested that Stars reduce, reorganize, and streamline forms and provide examples of completed forms, lists of approved grant purchases, and Stars training calendars. They also suggested that Delaware Stars consider providing orientation sessions and organizing support groups. Family child care programs suggested that they work as a cohort group, meeting at times convenient for them and allowing them to better support each other.

Technical Assistance: Technical assistance (TA) was reported as critical to program success. Technical assistants were praised for their positive attitude, knowledge, communication skills, dependability, ready availability, enthusiasm, and commitment. Programs reported that the following technical assistance was particularly helpful: initial “get acquainted” visits, providing quick answers to questions, observing in classrooms, attending staff meetings to talk about Stars, providing resources, and helping programs organize and prioritize their quality improvement work.

Training: Training was reported as extremely helpful to programs. As a result of training, staff were observed beginning to use information from the Environment Rating Scale and communicating with families about quality. The following topics were mentioned when programs were asked about what further training would be helpful: orientation to Delaware Stars, writing the Quality Improvement Plan, team building, policy development, curriculum planning, and child assessment.

VI. Using What We Learned – Making Recommended Changes

Standards: Center standards were revised to: offer two versions (one for early care and education programs and one for school-age only programs), make qualifications requirements at Star Level 2 better interface with licensing, and, at the suggestion of a national expert, move several standards to a higher level. Family child care standards will be revised when new licensing rules are finalized.

Program Supports: Grant funding was revised so as to offer different amounts to small and large centers. The Professional Development Support Grant can now be used for most education and/or training taken to meet qualifications standards – not just TECE 1 and 2 classes, as in 2007.

Process/Paperwork: Stars reduced the paperwork and revised forms, providing programs with three ways to access forms – in reorganized binders, on CDs, and on the web. Stars created a Program Guide that provides answers to frequently asked questions and a Stars Step-by-Step document. In addition, all programs now receive a packet of support materials complete with examples of many required policies and procedures.

Model: The Stars model was changed to: 1) require a series of three training sessions for program leaders that provides Delaware Stars orientation and help with the development of the first Quality Improvement Plan and initial grant requests, 2) provide case coordination, and 3) assign a technical assistant at the conclusion of the series of training sessions.

Delaware Stars for *Early Success*

Phase 1 Report – 2007

I. BACKGROUND

In 2007 Delaware began to “test” its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) – Delaware Stars for *Early Success*, inviting a small number of programs to participate and use the Stars quality improvement process to help with this effort. The plan for 2007 was to gather information from these programs and use it to make any necessary changes to the system in preparation for offering Delaware Stars to more programs. It is important to mention that Delaware Stars began at the same time that new center licensing rules were introduced, consequently the centers involved in Stars were dealing with new licensing rules and Delaware Stars standards at the same time. This presented a considerable challenge.

Delaware developed its quality standards in 2005. At that time, The Family & Workplace Connection (FWC) facilitated focus groups in which members of the early childhood community had the opportunity to provide input for these standards. In 2006, a Delaware Stars Design Work Group, which also included representation from the early childhood community, helped plan for the implementation of Phase 1.

Delaware Stars is part of the state’s plan for early care and education – *Early Success*, with oversight being provided by the Delaware Early Childhood Council (formerly the Delaware Early Care and Education Council). Delaware Stars is currently a public-private partnership between the state (Department of Education, Department of Health and Social Services, and Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families), The Family & Workplace Connection, a division of Children and Families First, and United Way of Delaware Success by 6™.

II. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DELAWARE STARS

Delaware Stars for *Early Success* is a five level system. Star Level 1, the lowest level, requires an early childhood program to meet child care licensing rules. With each higher Star Level a program is required to meet increasingly higher quality standards in the following categories:

- Qualifications & Professional Development
- Learning Environment & Curriculum
- Family & Community Partnerships
- Management & Administration

Delaware Stars is designed as a voluntary system that expects programs to work on improving quality by moving up the Star Levels. Delaware Stars provides technical assistance and limited financial support to programs involved in Stars as they engage in quality improvement efforts.

III. PHASE 1 PROGRAMS

The Delaware Stars Phase 1 plan was to include 15 programs, inviting applications from those programs that participated in the 2005 focus groups. Nineteen programs applied. Applications were reviewed; 15 programs were chosen that represented a variety of early care and education and school-age programs. This group is not, necessarily, representative of the distribution of program types across the state.

Small Center	8 (2 are school-age only programs)
Large Center	4
Family Child Care	2
Large Family Child Care	1

Small centers are those with 6 or fewer classrooms. One of the large centers is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Accredited programs enter Delaware Stars at Star Level 5. Including one accredited program gave Stars the opportunity to examine the interface between

accreditation and the Delaware Stars standards. Consequently, fourteen programs are actually moving through the quality improvement process.

These fifteen programs served approximately 1,083 children. Approximately 53,300 children are enrolled in early care and education and school-age programs in Delaware. (The number of children served can change daily.)

Children Served	Number of Programs
Infants	10
Toddlers	12
Preschool-age children	13
School-age children	5
Children with special needs	4
Children whose primary language is other than English	6
Children and families receiving Purchase of Care*	12

*Purchase of Care is Delaware’s Child Care subsidy program serving children and families who live within 200% of the federal poverty limit. While programs do not collect information about income levels of all families, many families these programs serve fit into the definition of moderate income.

Geographic Distribution	Number of Programs	Total Number of Programs in Each County
New Castle County	10	1,131
Kent County	2	312
Sussex County	3	365

IV. PROGRAM SUPPORTS

A. Awards and Grants

Delaware Stars offers four types of awards and grants to participating programs to support their quality improvement efforts.

1. Participation Award: Upon completion and approval of the initial Stars Quality Improvement Plan, participating programs receive a one-time award of \$200. *All 14 programs received this award for a total cost of \$2,800.*

2. Quality Improvement Grant: Participating programs can apply for a Quality Improvement Grant upon approval of their Quality Improvement Plan. Grant funds must be spent to support the strategies and actions outlined in that plan. Quality Improvement Grants are based on program type and Star Level.

Quality Improvement Grant				
	Working to Achieve Star 2	Working to Achieve Star 3	Working to Achieve Star 4	Working to Achieve Star 5
Center	\$2,000	\$9,000	\$5,500	\$7,500
Large Family Child Care	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$4,000
Family Child Care	\$750	\$3,500	\$2,000	\$2,500

Thirteen programs received Quality Improvement Grants for a total of \$12,025.08.

Quality Improvement Grant funds were used in the following manner:

Standards Categories	Purchases	Number of Programs Making Identified Purchases
Qualifications and Professional Development	1. College credits and training to meet administrator qualifications	5
	2. Support for required training	4
	3. College credits and/or training to meet staff qualifications	2
Learning Environment and Curriculum	1. Environment Rating Scale materials to support training	10
	2. Books and materials to support establishing children's goals and using those goals in lesson planning	7
	3. Books and materials to help establish procedures for documenting children's progress	3
Management and Administration	1. Software and books for developing a financial record-keeping system	4
	2. Help with development of an emergency management plan	3
	3. Books and materials for developing a record-keeping system for staff and children's records	2

3. Professional Development Support Grant: In 2007 the Professional Development Support Grant funds were used to pay for the cost of Training for Early Care and Education (TECE) 1 and TECE 2. Both of these 60 hour classes are pre-service requirements for teachers and/or assistant teachers in the new Delaware center licensing rules. *Six programs received Professional Development Support Grants for a total of \$6,986. Twenty-eight center staff received funds to support TECE classes.*

4. Merit Award: When a participating program completes all requirements for the next higher Star Level, the program is given a one-time Merit Award. The award amount is based on the type of program and the Star Level achieved. Programs that enter the Delaware Stars system at a Star Level 5 through national accreditation receive a one-time award to recognize their high level of quality.

Merit Award				
	Achieving Star 2	Achieving Star 3	Achieving Star 4	Achieving Star 5
Center	\$750	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500
Large Family Child Care	\$300	\$600	\$850	\$1,100
Family Child Care	\$250	\$500	\$625	\$750

Six programs received Merit Awards for achieving Star Level 2 for a total of \$3,500:

4 Centers	\$3,000
2 Family Child Care Homes	\$500

Accredited programs that enter the Delaware Stars system at Star Level 5 receive a one-time Merit Award:

Center	\$3,000
Large Family Child Care	\$1,500
Family Child Care	\$1,000

One center received this Star 5 Merit Award for \$3,000.

B. Technical Assistance

During 2007, Delaware contracted with 10 technical assistants to provide support to participating programs. The technical assistance rate was \$40 per hour (plus mileage, in some cases). Delaware Stars provide a target number of annual TA hours for each type of program. No program used the targeted number of hours:

Small Center:	100 hours
Large Center	150 hours
Family Child Care	50 hours
Large Family child Care	75 hours

A total of 678.25 hours of technical assistance were provided for a total cost of \$25,052.98. In addition, during Phase 1 the technical assistants provided Delaware Stars required training to participating programs, costing an additional \$4,469.74.

TA hours were spent helping programs work on:

Star Level 2:	636.75
Star Level 3:	38.75
Working with accredited program:	5.00

C. Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment:

Delaware Stars completed an ERS assessment for the Phase 1 accredited program – 5 classrooms at \$200 per classroom for a total of \$1,000.

V. WHAT DID WE LEARN IN PHASE 1?

Gathering information: Delaware Stars developed a simple database to track program activity. All Phase 1 programs and technical assistants provided feedback about their experience with Delaware Stars at meetings, and by completing surveys and follow-up interviews. In addition, advisory groups provided input.

A. Delaware Stars Standards:

Which standards were the most difficult to meet? Which standards appeared most often in Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs)?

In general, the standards that appeared most often in Quality Improvement Plans were focused on staff qualifications and the Delaware Stars required training. Programs also reported that several of the standards that require written policies and procedures were challenging – transition, inclusion, Code of Ethics, confidentiality, goals for children, and lesson planning that uses children’s goals. School-age programs report that standards

focused on family involvement are difficult for them. The following list provides details about those Star level 2 standards that appeared in QIPs.

Standard	Number of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) that included the standard. The first five standards on the list were included in more than half of the QIPs.
Training about Community Services and Resources	12
Training about Inclusion Best Practices	12
Training about the Environment Rating Scale	11
Training about Delaware’s Early Learning Foundations – ECE	10
Plan for transitioning children into program	8
Developing a Program Training Plan	6
Qualifications for assistant teachers	6
Written confidentiality policy	6
Documenting children’s progress	5
Program administration credit/training qualification for administrator	5
Qualifications for teachers	5
Reviewing children’s goals annually with staff – ECE	5
Using children’s goals for planning	5
Reviewing NAEYC Code of Ethics	4
Training about K-12 standards – SA	4
Staff self-assessment with Core Competencies	4
Written inclusion policy that is reviewed	4
Emergency management plan	3
Mission statement	3
Organizational chart shared	3
Record-keeping system for staff and children’s records	3
System for taking attendance periodically	3
Written goals for children’s development –ECE	3
Documentation of staff salary and benefits	2
Review goals annually with staff – SA	2
Written goals for children’s development –SA	2
Written personnel policies	2

On average, how much time did it take a program to move from one Star Level to the next?

Since all programs entered at Star Level 1, the following information is for movement from Star Level 1 to Star Level 2 during 2007. It is important to note that several programs continue to work on Star Level 2 in 2008, so we do NOT have a final figure for the average time for movement from Star Level 1 to Star Level 2.

Average in 2007: 200.5 days
 Range in 2007: 145-262 days

Which standards required the greatest amount of time and attention?

Technical assistants and programs reported that they spent the greatest amount of time working on reviewing staff qualifications and making plans for staff to meet qualifications. This task was complicated by the fact that new licensing rules were being instituted which include new qualifications requirements and that Delaware Stars standards at Star Level 2 interface with these rules and qualifications requirements.

What made the qualifications standards difficult to meet? Require so much time?

- Process of designating staff for the positions identified in the new licensing rules so programs could then determine whether staff were qualified and what education/training they might need.
- Limited availability of TECE 1 and 2 classes.
- Focus on elementary education credit for school-age staff; school-age qualifications may be holding some centers from moving forward.
- Program administrators:
 - Determining credits for qualifications – related fields and ECE credits
 - Meeting standard for clock hours/credits in program administration.

What will be the biggest challenge(s) in maintaining Star Level 2? Star Level 3?

Programs and technical assistants reported that staff turnover will create a challenge for programs as they try to maintain Star Level 2, specifically the standards for staff qualifications and the required training. Availability of training was also mentioned as an issue related to maintaining Star Level 2. Challenges at Star Level 3 will focus on maintenance of classroom environments to meet ERS requirements.

Which standards seemed to have the greatest positive impact on the quality of programs?

Both programs and technical assistants reported that the Delaware Stars required training had a significant impact on the quality of the program. In particular, the Environment Rating Scale and Early Learning Foundations training were mentioned. Programs commented that the training helped staff to “buy-in” to the quality improvement work. In addition, they reported that the documentation required in meeting many of the standards was beneficial to their program’s organization.

How closely will NAEYC accredited programs, entering Delaware Stars at Star Level 5, meet the standards?

Delaware Stars worked with the one accredited program that was involved in Phase 1 to determine how closely they meet a Star Level 5. The Star Level 5 program did quite well on the Environment Rating Scale assessment, but not quite high enough to meet Delaware Stars Level 5 standard.

Standards: The accredited program met most of the Delaware Stars standards. However, if the program were to be working through the standards to achieve a Star Level 5, they would need to focus on:

- Administrator qualifications – director certificate
- Qualifications of assistant teachers
- Delaware Stars required training
- Using Early Learning Foundations
- Documenting activities to support Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- ERS assessment, program evaluation

ERS Assessment: Five classrooms were assessed, two classrooms with the ITERS-R and three classrooms with the ECERS-R.

The two classrooms assessed using the ITERS-R had an average overall rating of 4.44 and 4.29. The two classrooms included a number of items with scores below 3, half of which were in the subscales of space and furnishings and personal care routines. Many of the lower scores were in relation to hand washing and sanitation procedures.

The three classrooms assessed using the ECERS-R had an average overall rating of 5.56, 5.08, and 6.1. All three classrooms had items that had a score below 3, half of which were in the subscale of personal care. The lower scores were mainly due to hand washing procedures or lack of.

The subscale that averaged the highest for all five classrooms was Interactions, with Parents and Staff subscale coming in a close second.

The Star Level 5 standard under Learning Environment and Curriculum states that each classroom or group of children assessed must have an average ERS score of no less than 5.0 and no item scored below 3. The program did not meet this standard because two of the classrooms assessed had an average score below a 5.0 and all five classrooms had one or more items score below 3.

B. Process/Paperwork:

What additional information would have been helpful to programs as they started the quality improvement process?

- Better organization of forms in binder that was provided
- List of approved purchases for grants
- Examples of completed forms
- Handbook
- Training calendar

In general, how could Delaware Stars be more helpful to programs?

- Reduce/streamline paperwork; organize forms
- Provide examples of completed forms
- Provide training about Delaware Stars
- Organize/facilitate support groups
- Provide timelines
- Ensure availability of training
- Create an information sheet for staff

What could Delaware Stars do to make the following steps in the quality improvement process easier to complete?

Requesting the initial Star Level designation:

- Streamline forms
- Delete Star Level 1
- Facilitate support groups

Developing the Quality Improvement Plan:

- Offer training about how to develop the QIP
- Reduce paperwork; streamline forms
- Provide examples of completed forms

Requesting Quality Improvement and Professional Development Support Grants:

- Provide list of possible grant expenditures

C. Technical Assistance:

In general, programs reported that the help of the technical assistants was absolutely critical to their success.

What did technical assistants do that was most helpful to programs?

Technical assistants reported:

- Training
- Organizing and prioritizing the quality improvement work
- Motivating and supporting programs

Programs reported:

- Supporting and encouraging programs
- Making themselves readily available
- Providing resources

At a joint meeting in March, 2007, technical assistants and programs reported:

- Doing a get acquainted visit
- Answering questions at start-up
- Providing quick answers to questions
- Observing in classrooms
- Attending staff meetings
- Reviewing information presented at meetings

What factors seemed to help the working relationship?

- Positive attitude
- TA's knowledge
- Communication
- Dependability
- Experience
- Ready availability
- Enthusiasm
- Supportive approach; positive comments; not intimidating staff
- Commitment from programs

Suggestions for improving the Delaware Stars technical assistance process:

- Need to find a way for technical assistants to work with family child care programs during the day.
- More opportunity for discussion among TAs.

What might help programs be more independent in their quality improvement work – reducing reliance on technical assistants?

- Case coordination/management
- Support groups
- Organize paperwork; label forms
- Create:
 - Checklists
 - TA online; hotlines
 - Templates and examples of completed forms
 - Examples of required documents
 - Electronic forms

D. Training:

Was the Delaware Stars required training helpful?

The overwhelming response was that the required training was helpful.

What, if anything, were staff observed doing differently as a result of training?

- Using information from ERS training – beginning informal self-assessment and improvement
- Communicating with families about quality improvement

What additional training might have been helpful? (Each of the following items was mentioned only once.)

- Orientation to Stars
- How to write a QIP
- Team building
- Policy writing
- Curriculum planning
- Child assessment

Suggestions for delivering training effectively:

- Full day sessions, Saturday sessions, 7:00-9:00 in the evening

E. General Feedback:

What positive effects were observed as a result of being involved in Delaware Stars?

Fourteen of the 15 programs involved were overwhelmingly positive, offering the following:

- Better trained and qualified staff; support for professional development
- Requires program to look at aspects of the program that may have been overlooked; helped to address weaknesses; became more organized
- Families were more informed

One program was quite frustrated with the constant staff turnover they experienced and the challenge that presented for getting staff qualified. They were also frustrated with the pace of the quality improvement process.

Technical assistants

- Greater understanding of quality
- Staff “buy-in” to quality improvement work; team building

What negative effects, if any, were observed as a result of being involved in Delaware Stars?

Both programs and technical assistants mentioned the significant amount of time required, the paperwork load, and, consequently, a certain amount of stress and frustration.

What efforts were made to help staff understand Delaware Stars and to get their “buy-in” to the program’s involvement in quality improvement?

- Talked about higher quality:
 - Benefit for children
 - Bringing more respect
- Had Delaware Stars TA speak at a staff meeting and talk individually with staff

What information would be helpful to prospective programs as they consider making application to Delaware Stars? What information might be shared at an initial information session?

- Talk about Stars being a stamp of excellence and the benefit of quality for children
- Share standards – talk about it being OK to enter at Star Level 1
- Have someone who has been involved speak about their experience
- Reinforce that Stars is a program of the Department of Education
- Share a little information about trends across the country
- Share information about supports available
- Talk about the need for commitment to the process, but it is doable
- Stress the idea that it is a process of change
- Talk about importance of getting staff “buy-in”
- Talk about training requirements
- Speak to any possible confusion about Stars and new licensing rules

VI. USING WHAT WE LEARNED – MAKING RECOMMENDED CHANGES

In response to the feedback from programs and technical assistants and input from the Management Team and Design Work Group, the following changes were made for 2008 to further “test” the system and to make it more program-driven:

A. Standards:

The center standards were reviewed and the following changes were made:

- Center standards were produced in two versions, one for early care and education centers and one for school-age programs.
- Standards were eliminated that are now found in the new Delaware center licensing rules.
- Because Delaware’s center licensing rules have significantly increased staff qualifications, staff qualifications standards at Star Level 2 are the same as licensing requirements, however programs are required to have staff get qualifications certificates from Delaware First.
- Based on input from a national expert (who told us that Delaware’s standards were extremely high), several standards were rewritten so as not to be quite as stringent and a small number of standards were moved to a higher level.
- A standards checklist was created for each Star Level for each type of program.
- Standards were coded.

A decision was made to wait on the revision of the Delaware Stars standards for Family Child Care and Large Family Child Care until the new licensing rules for these programs have been finalized. At that time the Stars standards will be revised.

B. Program Support:

Awards and Grants:

- The Quality Improvement Grant, Professional Development Support Grant and Merit Award were revised so there is a different amount of funding for small and large centers.

- The Professional Development Support Grant was expanded so that funds can be used to pay for education and training that supports staff qualifications beyond TECE 1 and TECE 2.

Technical Assistance:

- Increased the number of technical assistants.
- Provided technical assistants with packets of support materials and clearer directions for their work.

C. Paperwork/process:

Delaware Stars has:

- Reduced paperwork, eliminating some forms.
- Revised forms in an attempt to make them easier to use; numbered all forms.
- Created a binder of forms and materials with a table of contents; put all forms on CDs that were shared.
- Created a Stars step-by-step document.
- Created a Program Guide that outlines policies and includes answers to frequently asked questions.
- Placed all forms on the web with easy access (not on a hidden page).
- Created packets of support materials for each Star Level, complete with examples of several of the policies that are required.

D. Model:

In 2008, Delaware Stars will test a model that takes advantage of a cohort approach and is more participant driven. Stars will also use a case management process.

- Programs that enter Delaware Stars at each enrollment period form a group that attends a series of three sessions. They leave each session with an assignment that helps them complete the initial steps in the quality improvement process.
 1. Session I: Stars Orientation (includes a brief training session about “Leading Continuous Quality Improvement”)
 2. Session II: Writing a Quality Improvement Plan
 3. Session III: Quality Improvement and Professional Development Grants
- As programs move through this series of meetings, a program coordinator is available to meet with them and answer questions about the process and paperwork. The coordinator assumes case management responsibilities.
- At the end of this period, programs are assigned a technical assistant to help with implementation of the QIP. The program coordinator continues to monitor program’s progress.

Delaware Stars Phase 1

The following groups gave of their time and considerable expertise during Phase 1 as Delaware Stars developed and tested the system.

Delaware Stars Management Team

Janet Carter	Department of Education, Office of Early Care and Education
Candace deCsipkes	Delaware Stars
Eulinda Dipietro	Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services
Evelyn Keating	The Family & Workplace Connection, a division of Children and Families First
Patricia Quinn	Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Office of Child Care Licensing
Verna Thompson	Department of Education, Office of Early Care and Education
Janet Umble	United Way Success by 6™
Ann Wick	Delaware Early Childhood Council
Kathy Wilson	Department of Education, Delaware First

Delaware Stars Design Work Group*

Martha Bolling	Social Venture Partners – Delaware
Peg Bradley	University of Delaware
Bill Carl	Newark Day Nursery
Janet Cornwell	Delaware Early Childhood Center
Barbara Dixon	Nursery Kindergarten Association of Delaware
Norma Everett	Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health
Scot Felderman	United Way
Lynn Jezyk	Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Office of Child Care Licensing
Julie Johnson	Tender Loving Kare
Pauline Koch	National Association of Regulatory Agencies
Jim Lesko	Department of Education
Dayna Moore	Lessons Learned Day Care and Preschool
Connie Moran	Department of Education
Dorothy Onn	Nemours Health and Prevention Services
Helen Riley	St. Michael's Day Nursery
Cynthia Romero	Latin American Community Center – La Fiesta
Karen Rucker	Trainer
Barbara Sheppard-Taylor	Delaware Technical & Community College – Wilmington Campus
Michelle Taylor	United Way
Betty Gail Timm	University of Delaware
Marge Verducchi	JP Morgan Chase
Elizabeth Walker	Nemours Health and Prevention Services
Violet Waters	Stepping Stones Day Care, Inc.
Linda Zankowsky	Wilmington Montessori School

*Members of the Management Team also served on the Design Work Group

Phase 1 Programs

Babes on the Square	Wilmington
Boys & Girls Clubs of DE – Highlands Elementary	Wilmington
Cozy Critters	Frankford
Del Tech Terry Campus Child Development Center	Dover
Ebenezer Preschool	Newark
First Encounters Child Care	Wilmington
Hannah's Christian Home Day Care	Bear
Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center	Wilmington
Jewish Community Center Early Childhood Center	Wilmington
The King's Kids	Hockessin
Ministry of Caring – Guardian Angel Child Care	Wilmington
Parents and Children Together at Tech	Georgetown
Parker's Playhouse	Wilmington
Rehoboth YMCA – Rehoboth Elementary School	Rehoboth
The Children's Secret Garden	Dover

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