



Ohio Revised Code Section 5104.29 Step up to quality program.

Effective: September 29, 2015

Legislation: House Bill 64 - 131st General Assembly

(A) As used in this section, "early learning and development program" has the same meaning as "licensed child care program" as defined in section 5104.01 of the Revised Code.

(B) There is hereby created in the department of job and family services the step up to quality program, under which the department of job and family services, in cooperation with the department of education, shall develop a tiered quality rating and improvement system for all early learning and development programs in this state. The step up to quality program shall include all of the following components:

- (1) Quality program standards for early learning and development programs;
- (2) Accountability measures that include tiered ratings representing each program's level of quality;
- (3) Program and provider outreach and support to help programs meet higher standards and promote participation in the step up to quality program;
- (4) Financial incentives for early learning and development programs that provide publicly funded child care and are linked to achieving and maintaining quality standards;
- (5) Parent and consumer education to help parents learn about program quality and ratings so they can make informed choices on behalf of their children.

(C) The step up to quality program shall have the following goals:

- (1) Increasing the number of low-income children, special needs children, and children with limited English proficiency participating in quality early learning and development programs;
- (2) Providing families with an easy-to-use tool for evaluating the quality of early learning and



development programs;

(3) Recognizing and supporting early learning and development programs that achieve higher levels of quality;

(4) Providing incentives and supports to help early learning and development programs implement continuous quality improvement systems.

(D) Under the step up to quality program, participating early learning and development programs may be eligible for grants, technical assistance, training, and other assistance. Programs that maintain a quality rating may be eligible for unrestricted monetary awards.

(E) The tiered ratings developed pursuant to this section shall be based on an early learning and development program's performance in meeting program standards in the following four domains:

(1) Learning and development;

(2) Administration and leadership practices;

(3) Staff quality and professional development;

(4) Family and community partnerships.

(F) The director of job and family services, in collaboration with the superintendent of public instruction, shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to implement the step up to quality program described in this section.

(G)(1) The department of job and family services shall ensure that the following percentages of early learning and development programs that are not type B family day-care homes and that provide publicly funded child care are rated in the third highest tier or above in the step up to quality program:

(a) By June 30, 2017, twenty-five per cent;



(b) By June 30, 2019, forty per cent;

(c) By June 30, 2021, sixty per cent;

(d) By June 30, 2023, eighty per cent;

(e) By June 30, 2025, one hundred per cent.

(2) The department of job and family services and the department of education shall identify ways to accelerate early learning and development programs moving to higher tiers in the step up to quality program and identify strategies for appropriate ratings of type B homes. The departments may consult with the early childhood advisory council established pursuant to section 3301.90 of the Revised Code to facilitate their efforts and shall include owners and administrators of early learning and development programs in the identification process. The departments shall report their recommendations to the general assembly not later than October 31, 2016.