

Montana's Early Childhood System

Board of Education Meeting
November 12, 2009

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Board of Education, Montana's EC
System 11.12.09



Why are the early years so important?



Closing the Achievement Gap by starting early...

- Early Childhood 0-8
- Brain development
- Language and Literacy development





Supporting the early years

- 
- Early Care and Education
 - Family Support and Parent Education
 - Health Care and Medical Homes
 - Mental Health



How is this getting done?



- FT KG
- Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant
- Investments in Early Childhood Economic Impact Study
- School Readiness Teams
- Longitudinal Data Grant
- Best Beginnings STARS to Quality



The BIG picture



- Early Care and Education is:
 - in demand
 - an economic issue,
 - a child development issue
 - an education issue, and
 - a family support issue
- Parent fees can't do it alone
- Low barrier to enter the field



Early Childhood Services Bureau Child Care and Development Fund



- Supporting Low Income Families
- Maintaining Health & Safety
- Improving Quality
 - 4% of funds
 - Targeted funds
 - School Age and Child Care Resource & Referral
 - Infant/Toddler
 - Consumer Education and Expansion



Brief History...



- Many, Many Quality Initiatives
- Couldn't really tell if we were improving quality outcomes
- We also know that high quality early childhood programs are lacking in our state



The simple truth



As we raise the level of quality experiences for young children

More kids will be ready for school and be successful in learning... thereby closing the achievement gap in later years





The Result:

Montana's Quality Rating
Improvement System: Best
Beginnings STARS to Quality

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Core Values of STARS



- Voluntary
- Focus to improve quality early childhood services for children and families served in early childhood programs
- Practitioner/program driven
- Support and incentives most important
- Celebrate the achievement

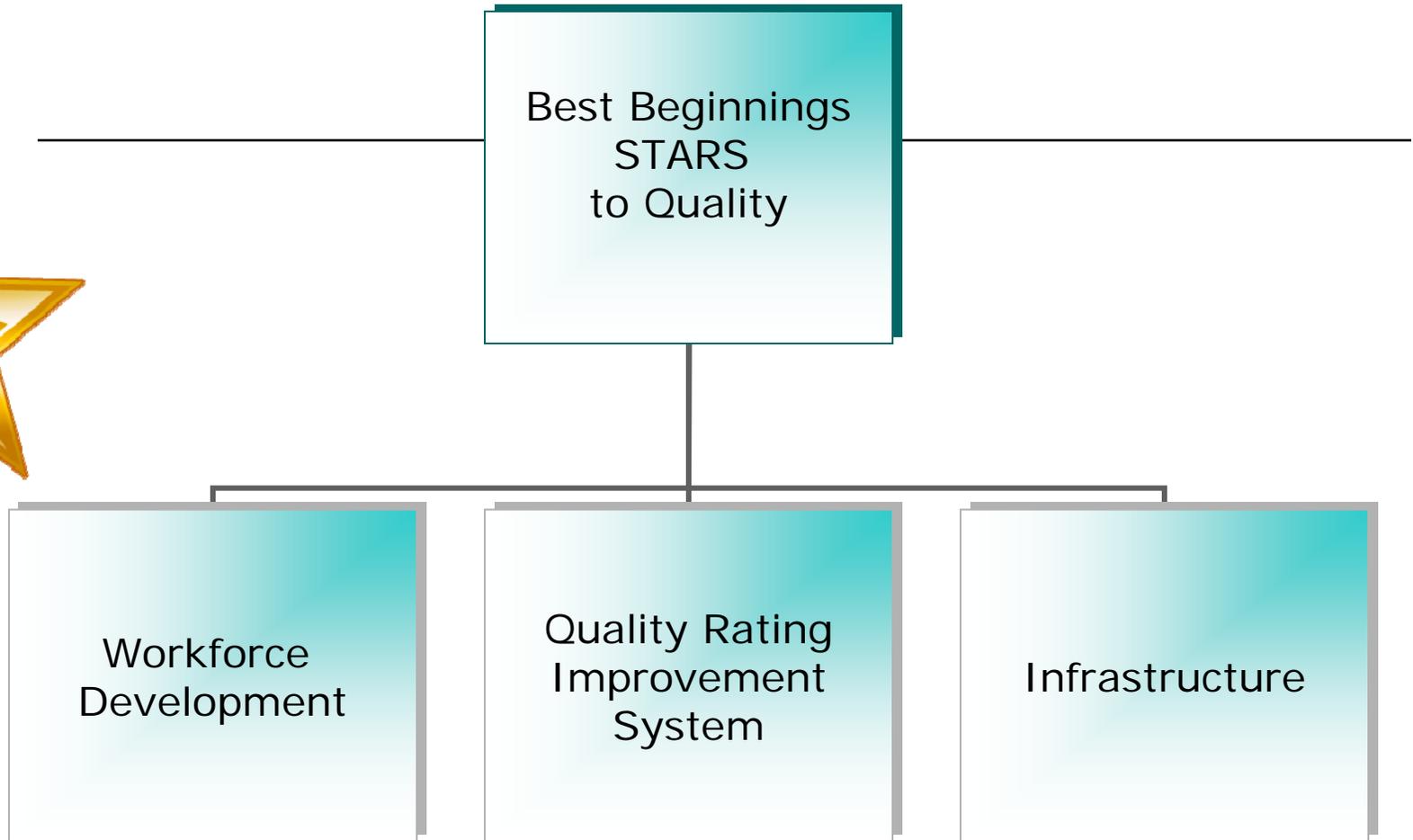


STARS essentials



- 5 Star System
- Research based criteria
- Workforce Support to encourage professional development along a continuum of training
- Maintaining quality over time
- Annual renewals based on validation of level and program improvement plans
- Monetary incentives based on level achieved
- Program assessment tools





Professional Development Awards



Montana Infant Toddler Certified Caregiver	Montana Preschool Certified Caregiver	Higher Education Merit Pay	Other Approved Training
\$500 award upon completion of the training	\$500 award upon completion of the training	\$750 per semester (2 semesters/yr)	\$500
\$800 annual stipend for 2 years if you stay working in the program	\$800 annual stipend for 2 years if you stay working in the program		

STARS criteria



Education, Qualifications and Training of Staff/Caregivers

Staff/Caregivers to Child Ratio and Group Sizes

Family & Community Partnerships

Leadership & Program Management

Environments for Care & Learning



What's the difference between a 1 Star facility and a 5 Star Facility?



1 STAR

- Licensed/Registered
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Attend specific health & safety training (ie. safe sleep, medication administration)
- Join the practitioner registry

5 STAR

- Nationally accredited
- Higher levels of education among staff
- Scores higher on the rating scales
- Expected to give back to the field through mentoring, etc



STARS incentives



1 STAR: Beginner STAR kit, Resources, Help and Support

2 STARS: \$2500 - \$8250 + 5% increase for scholarship rate

3 STARS: \$3750 - \$12,500 + 10% increase for scholarship rate

4 STARS: \$5000 - \$16,250 + 15% increase for scholarship rate

5 STARS: \$6250 - \$20,000 + 20% increase for scholarship rate



Infrastructure



Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies

Early Childhood Project

Accreditation support

Curriculum and people to teach the curriculums

Updated computer system to track data

Assessors

Materials for program observation, goal setting, etc

Consumer Education



For every \$100,000 spent...

We could include:

10 programs

30 practitioners

Impacting:

300 children



On the horizon...



Early Learning Council Grant
Early Learning Challenge Grants
OPI Longitudinal Data Grant
Continued work on public/private
partnerships and business support

