

Parent Aware Rating Tool

Frequently Asked Questions, Child Care Providers/Early Educators

What is Minnesota's Parent Aware Rating Tool?

The Parent Aware Rating Tool is designed to **recognize** child care providers/early educators for the quality of care they deliver and to highlight the importance of nurturing, learning-based care for all children. The rating tool will also **support** child care/early learning professionals in their efforts to incorporate the latest in early learning best practices.

Because children's early experiences last a lifetime, this work is important for Minnesota's future.

Where will the pilot program take place?

The pilot of the Parent Aware Rating Tool program will include licensed child care providers/early educators in Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties, the Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the Wayzata School District.

The Parent Aware Rating Tool is not currently available in my community. When will it become available to me? We are not sure however, the State Legislature may decide to broaden the program across Minnesota.

How will the pilot program work?

Programs will receive ratings using a point system. Points will be awarded based on documentation and onsite observations.

Program features in the following areas will be recognized:

- **Family Partnerships**
- **Teaching Materials and Strategies**
- **Tracking Learning**
- **Teacher Training and Education**

Why should my program participate now or when the program becomes available to me?

- 87 percent of parents surveyed say they would find a quality rating system helpful and would in fact use it.
- Getting your program in on the "ground floor" as the system is introduced allows you to demonstrate proudly that you are delivering the best in care and/or are on the road to reaching this excellence.
- Additional improvement supports and resources will be made available to all programs participating in the full rating. We are here to help you begin this exciting process and applaud you for your commitment to quality!

My child care/early education program is full and we often have a waiting list for enrollment. What can the Parent Aware Rating Tool do for me? Child care quality rating is a national trend that is gaining momentum in Minnesota. To let parents and families in your community know that you are fully committed to preparing their children for school, and that the children in your program are receiving the best care available is well worth the effort. Additional improvement supports and resources will be made available to all programs participating in the full rating.

How can I get involved? Child care providers/early educators in the pilot areas may volunteer to participate in the program. A provider resource specialist will be assigned to help you through the process. Please contact Valerie Peterson at valeriep@mnchildcare.org or (651) 290-9704, ext. 107 for more information or to register for a program orientation.

How can I prepare my program for the Parent Aware Rating process?

The Environment Rating Scale© is a key tool used in the rating process. Becoming familiar with this tool is a great place to begin. To read more about the Environment Rating Scale© log on to www.parentawareratings.org and click on the Preparation tab.

The Not by Chance: Child Care that Supports School Readiness trainings are designed to familiarize child care providers with the three tools (including the Environment Rating Scale), which the Minnesota Department of Human Services supports to increase quality in child care. These trainings represent a strong foundation in the indicator areas rated by the Parent Aware Rating Tool. Consider participating in one of these training sessions. To read more about Not by Chance log on to www.parentawareratings.org and click on the Preparation tab.

Preschool classrooms in center-based child care programs will also be observed using the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS) © tool. To read more about CLASS log on to www.parentawareratings.org and click on the Preparation tab.

One means of reaching the 4-star quality rating level is to become accredited. The Minnesota Accreditation Facilitation Project can help your program evaluate if accreditation is the best option for your program, and if you choose to pursue accreditation, can help you do it. For more information, visit <http://mnaeyc-mnsaca.org> or call (800) 711-5690.

I have heard that there may be financial assistance available in paying for highly rated child care programs. Is this still the case? The funding for the allowance program was not continued by the Legislature.

Will licensing violations impact my Parent Aware quality rating?

Sometimes. It depends on the type of violation.

Correction orders will not impact Parent Aware ratings. Sanctions, sometimes also referred to as negative actions, may impact your Parent Aware rating. If, within the past two years, your program was issued any sanctions under [Minnesota statutes, section 245A.07](#), has been on a conditional license, or has had a maltreatment determination, you will not be eligible to receive more than 1 star in the Parent Aware Rating Tool.

Sanctions included in Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.07, include:

- Temporary immediate suspension of a license
- Suspension of a license
- Revocation of a license
- Fine

Conditional licenses are outlined in [Minnesota statutes, Chapter 245A.06](#).

Maltreatment determinations are outlined in [Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556](#).

Definitions of these terms can be found at the [end of this document](#).

What is the difference between a “correction order,” a “sanction” and a “negative action”?

Correction orders are issued by the licensing authority when a program has failed to comply with applicable rule or law.

The sanctions (fines, suspensions, revocation, temporary immediate suspensions) as well as conditional licenses are sometimes referred to as negative actions. Negative actions are taken when the program has failed to comply with applicable rule or law and the nature, severity or chronicity of those violations warrants a more severe sanction. Find more information on licensing terms at the end of this document.

What is a provisional rating and how is it different from a full rating?

A provisional rating is a temporary rating designed for child care providers who are in the process of becoming accredited by a major, national accrediting body. It allows them to join the program and receive a rating while they await notice on their accreditation. When they become fully accredited they are eligible for a four star rating.

Will accreditation affect my Parent Aware quality rating?

Programs accredited by one of the following national accrediting organizations may receive up to a 4-star rating through the Parent Aware Rating Tool if they meet all high-quality rating criteria.

The types of accreditations eligible to receive a 4-star rating in Parent Aware include:

- National Association for Family Child Care
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Council on Accreditation
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
- American Montessori Society
- Association of Montessori International-USA

To receive this rating, programs must also meet prerequisites for accredited programs:

- Submit a narrative describing their program’s philosophy
- Complete a health and safety checklist
- Agree to participate in a Parent Aware Rating Tool evaluation
- Be free of any sanctions under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.07, may not have operated with a conditional license, or had a maltreatment determination in the past two years.

I qualify for the differential child care payment rate through the Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Does this mean I will automatically be rated as a 4-star program?

No. The differential child care payment rate available through the Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) allows accredited child care programs and family child care providers with a National Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or higher to charge the state up to 15 percent above the maximum reimbursement rate if they also charge private-pay families that higher rate. For the purposes of the Parent Aware Rating Tool pilot, only accreditations, not professional development credentials, qualify programs and providers for a possible 4-star rating.

Is there a cost to participate?

There is no cost to participate in Parent Aware.

Definitions of Licensing Terms

Licensing term	Definition
Conditional	The license has been placed on conditional status. The license holder may continue operating under special terms.
Fine	The license holder has violated a licensing regulation and has been issued a fee that must be paid by a certain date.
Maltreatment Determination	The license holder or facility has been found responsible for abuse or neglect of a child.
Revocation	The license holder's license has been taken away due to serious or chronic violations of licensing requirements. The license holder <i>may not operate</i> . The program cannot be granted a license for 5 years.
Suspension	The license holder's license has been suspended due to violations of licensing requirements. The license holder <i>may not operate</i> until they meet certain conditions. Once conditions are met, the suspension may be lifted by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, allowing them to begin to operate again.
Temporary Immediate Suspension	The license holder's license has been immediately suspended based on imminent risk of harm to children. The license holder <i>may not operate</i> . A final sanction (such as suspension or revocation) may be issued after the investigation is complete.