

"Children who participate in high quality pre-kindergarten programs fare better in school, have better home lives, and ... go on to higher achievement later in life, graduating from high school and attending college at a higher rate, and earning more once they enter the labor force."

— Economic Policy Institute, 2007

Sarasota Community Reaches for the Stars

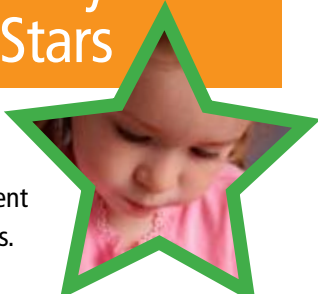
The Sarasota County community has joined together to create **Look for the Stars**, a Quality Improvement System (QIS) for child care providers. The goal is to:

- ★ Help parents understand quality and seek it when selecting programs for their children.
- ★ Encourage early care and education providers to offer high quality early learning experiences.

Look for the Stars has been made possible through financial grants and community-wide collaboration and seeks to:

- S**upport and promote policies designed for quality improvement
- T**each parents and encourage them to become informed consumers and choose quality care
- A**dvocate best practices to encourage legislators, tax payers and families to feel confident investing in quality
- R**einforce the importance of quality care with providers and work together for quality improvements

Each center that participates in **Look for the Stars** will proudly display a decal indicating their commitment to quality.



To learn more about the **Look for the Stars** Quality Improvement System, please visit our website at www.lookforthestars.org

or call the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County at **941.954.4830**



Community Partners:



LOOK for the STARS



Super Kids + Super Care = Star-Bright Futures

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO QUALITY CHILD CARE IN SARASOTA COUNTY



The **Look for the Stars** Quality Improvement System is owned by the community, supported by the Quality Child Care Council, and administered by the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County.

★ Look for Star Quality

As a parent, you want the best possible early learning environment for your child. However, recognizing and defining quality is not always easy. Fortunately, with the introduction of the new Quality Improvement System in Sarasota County, called **Look for the Stars**, recognizing quality just got a whole lot easier!

With **Look for the Stars**, Sarasota will join other communities across the nation, in addition to nine others in Florida, by implementing an important child care quality improvement system.

Many parents rely on child care programs to help care for their children. A **Look for the Stars** quality star level will provide parents with accurate, reliable information about program quality to help guide the decision-making process.

This easy to understand five star quality improvement system is another tool to help parents identify centers that offer quality programming. A quality center:

- ★ Understands that learning begins at birth
- ★ Provides activities for children to learn effectively
- ★ Offers a safe and inviting environment
- ★ Encourages children to have a fun, hands-on experience
- ★ Incorporates parents and families as their child's very important first teachers

The answer is in the STARS!

Look for the Stars is a consumer guide for measuring quality in early care and education. Providers who achieve a three, four or five star level are providing and maintaining high levels of quality child care for the children of Sarasota. Providers who achieve a two star level are recognized for providing quality above state licensing requirements and have demonstrated that they are actively taking steps to improve quality.

Look for the Stars is designed to promote excellent early child care and education for our community's children as well as offer support services to our area providers.

★	Meets basic state licensing standards
★ ★	Goes above state licensing standards
★ ★ ★	Consistently good quality
★ ★ ★ ★	Consistently high quality
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Consistently exemplary quality



★ Star Providers

Providers who participate in **Look for the Stars** are:

- ★ Striving to provide the best early learning environments
- ★ Improving their program and curriculum through ongoing assessment
- ★ Implementing the best early childhood learning practices
- ★ Engaging in continual professional development

Please visit our website at www.lookforthestars.org for a comprehensive list of participating providers.



Look for the Stars is designed to review and evaluate provider programs based on early learning research. A center's voluntary participation indicates their commitment to early care and education in our community. The evaluation is done by a team of independent professionals, trained in the field of early child care and education and is based on the following areas:

What's in the Stars?

- ★ Learning Environment
- ★ Ratio and Group Size
- ★ Curriculum & Child Assessment
- ★ Staff Qualifications & Professional Development
- ★ Family Involvement & Engagement
- ★ Administrative & Business Practices

