

The Kansas Quality Rating and Improvement System

A Snapshot for Families

Choosing Child Care That's Right for You We Can Help

Choosing the child care program that's right for you and your children can be a daunting task. The Kansas Quality Rating and Improvement System (KQRIS) can help! KQRIS conducts annual assessments of child care programs that are licensed by the state and awards a rating of 1 – 5 Stars, based on five key areas of quality. Each area receives points, and those total points add up to a Star Rating – just like hotels, restaurants or movies.

5 Areas of Quality

KQRIS assesses 5 key areas of quality including...

Learning Environment – types of learning and play activities, variety of materials and toys, teacher-child interactions, precautions for health and safety, and many more

Family Partnerships – types of activities that families can be involved in and how often they are offered, how the program communicates with families about their children and families' ability to make decisions in the program

Training and Education – the level of formal college coursework and ongoing in-service for staff and administrators

Ratios and Group Size – the number of adults present for children and the size of the group as a whole

Accreditation – accreditation is awarded by various early childhood organizations to programs who meet national standards of excellence

The following snapshots provide generalized descriptions of programs. Not all programs share the same strengths or needed improvements.

★ 1 Star Programs

- Health and safety issues around handwashing and playground cushioning are usually present
- Family involvement activities are often non-existent
- Teacher training is frequently very low
- Program rarely meets standards for accreditation

★★ 2 Star Programs

- Program often lacks enough basic equipment and toys for play and learning
- Family involvement activities are often minimal
- Teacher training is usually minimal
- Ratios usually meet licensing standards, but aren't high enough to allow for individualized care
- Program rarely meets standards for accreditation

★★★ 3 Star Programs

- Children's basic health and safety needs are usually met, as well as adequate amounts of toys
- Families often feel a sense of stability in the program
- Teachers have enough training to meet licensing standards
- Program is beginning see how staff stability is linked to children's feeling and daily experiences
- Program is beginning to meet some accreditation standards

★★★★ 4 Star Programs

- Children have access to a variety of meaningful play and learning experiences
- Families are informed about what's going on with their children, in the program and in the community
- Staff are knowledgeable about child development
- Ratios allow for some individualized care
- Program often meets standards for accreditation

★★★★★ 5 Star Programs

- Program offers a curriculum full of activities that support health development of social skills, as well as emotional, physical and cognitive development
- Families are an integral part of the program, both socially and in decision making
- Staff are very knowledgeable about age-appropriate activities and base lessons on the individual needs of children
- Good ratios allow for more individualized care
- Program often meets standards for accreditation

How Do I Find Out More About Child Care Quality?

You can find more information about child care program quality in two different ways.

One: When searching for child care ask your Referral Counselor how you can access information about the KORIS Quality Rating Summary for rated child care programs.

Two: When searching for child care on-line, be sure to filter for sites with a Quality Rating. Then click on the link called "Quality Rating Report". Provider Profiles are also available on-line, providing photos and highlighting program offerings.

KORIS provides a current Quality Rating Summary for each child care program that KORIS assesses. Quality Rating Summaries give families information about the overall Star Rating, the points earned in each of the five key areas of quality, as well as strengths and areas where the program can focus improvement efforts in the next year.

Families can use both the overall Star Rating and the Quality Rating Summary to help narrow their child care searches and to learn more about potential child care programs. First, use the Star Rating to get a picture of the program's general level of quality. Next, use the Quality Rating Summary to review each area of strengths that meet your needs and the needs of your children. The Quality Rating Summary is provided to help parents and others identify individual programs which have successfully achieved a KORIS Quality Rating. **It is intended only as a guide for families in selecting child care and should not be used as a substitute for seeking licensing information, visiting the program, and obtaining recommendations from family and friends.**

The following is an excerpt from a 3 Star program's Quality Rating Summary

Quality Rating Components / Scoring Approach	Points Earned/Possible	KORIS Rating Information
<p>The Learning Environment component measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The space and furnishings available to children The health and safety of the environment How well providers support children's language development The activities available to children and their daily schedule How well providers support children's social development and the quality of their interactions with children <p><i>Quality Rating Points range from 0 (very low quality) to 10 (excellent quality).</i></p>	6/10	<p>Observed Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider uses a variety of descriptive words and phrases to support children's language development. <p>Recommendations for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider adding more portable and stationary equipment to give more children an opportunity for physical play.
<p>The Family Partnerships component measures how well programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop relationships with families Serve as a community resource for families Offer families opportunities to be part of their children's early learning experience Communicate with families about their child's development and how the program operates <p><i>Quality Rating Points range from 0 (few family partnership activities offered) to 10 (many family partnership activities offered).</i></p>	2/10	<p>Observed Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families in the program report that the provider frequently communicates with parents through a variety of positive methods. <p>Recommendations for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information and resources to families to help support them in their parenting practices, and to learn more about child development.
Total Points: 24/42		Star Rating ★★ ★

What's most important to your family?

1 → Overall level of quality – the Star Rating

2 → Key indicators of quality – the Component Points

