

**STARS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**  
*Policy And Procedures Manual*



Reaching higher for quality child care

# *Acknowledgements*

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# I. Background

Keystone STARS is a quality improvement initiative designed to recognize and reward child care facilities that exceed state health and safety licensing requirements. Child care facilities are awarded a STAR One, STAR Two, STAR Three, or STAR Four quality rating based on their achievement of quality performance standards in the areas of staff education, learning environment, and administration. The STAR rating reflects standards of quality that are research based and linked to improved outcomes for children as related to social and emotional development, learning skills, and school readiness.

As the newest component of services provided to child care facilities under Keystone STARS, STARS Technical Assistance (TA) is comprised of a statewide network of eight organizations that provide consultation and technical assistance to support the Keystone STARS quality improvement initiative (see Appendix A: *STARS TA Organization List and Map*). The STARS TA organizations provide individualized and on-site assistance to facilities, helping them achieve a specified knowledge area or performance expectation of the Keystone STARS standards.

STARS TA organizations serve Keystone STARS (KS) facilities within designated geographic areas and are responsible to provide and coordinate the delivery of technical assistance services that are requested by Keystone STARS facilities within their area.

## I. 1 STARS TA Goals

The goals of STARS TA are to:

- Establish a statewide, stable network of technical assistance services for the Keystone STARS initiative.
- Foster the formation of collaborative partnerships (coordinated through a lead agency, serving as a single point of contact) among community-based consultants to deliver comprehensive consultation services to Keystone STARS facilities.
- Assist eligible Keystone STARS child care facilities to achieve specific quality performance standards required for STAR 2 and higher designations.

## I. 2 Administration of STARS TA

Under the direction of DPW, Keystone University Research Corporation (KURC) administers eight (8) STARS TA organizations that are contracted to deliver technical assistance services to KS facilities within a specific geographic area.

During the initial start-up period that began in the second half of SFY 2003-04, KURC worked with DPW and the STARS TA organizations to establish the overall structure, policies, and basic operational procedures for STARS TA. The start-up period included these tasks: development of policies and procedures and preparation of forms and accompanying manual; development of a database system; specification of an evaluation design; and the training/orientation of the consultant pool to key components of the Keystone STARS system and the PA Pathways training system.

The work of policy and procedure development is a continuing process and through regular meetings, DPW, KURC, the STARS TA organizations, and the CCRDs will fine tune the policies and procedures of STARS TA as it interfaces with all components of the KS quality improvement system.

In addition to the initial responsibility of KURC during the start-up phase, the other administrative responsibilities include:

- **Monitoring STARS TA organization contracts and providing oversight of STARS TA.** This includes ensuring that the STARS TA organizations are fulfilling the requirements of their contract, particularly as it relates to fiscal matters and the STARS TA organizations' agreements with partnering consultants; collaboration with the CCRDs, KURC environment rating scale assessors, and PA Pathways; and the quality and integrity of their delivery of technical assistance.
- **Developing criteria and methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of STARS TA.** This includes assessing outcomes of STARS TA as well as examining caregivers' satisfaction with the TA services. The effectiveness of STARS TA is based on a number of criteria, which shall include but may not be limited to the extent to which the TA enabled a facility to meet specific knowledge areas or performance expectations of the Keystone STARS standards as reflected in the STARS TA service plan.

### I. 3 Domains of Service

Either directly or through collaborative partnerships with other organizations and/or individuals, the STARS TA organizations are required to:

- Deliver technical assistance services that directly relate to the KS performance standards in these four *content areas*: learning environment; family and community partnerships; administration/business practices; and health and safety.
- Provide technical assistance services, in the applicable content area, across these designated *groups of children*: infants and toddlers; pre-schoolers; school-age children; and children with special needs.

- Provide technical assistance services, in the each content area, across all groups of children, within these *types of child care environments*: center-based care; group-based care; and home-based care.
- Understand how to use the *environment rating scale assessments* (e.g., ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FDCRS, and SACERS) to determine areas of need and to plan quality improvements.

#### **I. 4 Operational Procedures**

July 2004 is the start-up date for the operation of STARS TA. While the initial implementation was based on the guiding principles, along with policies and procedures that were developed during the start-up phase, it is understood that the implementation of STARS TA is an on-going and evolving process. As the STARS TA organizations learn from their practices, the policies and procedures will be modified as needed and agreed upon by DPW. As of July 2004, the policies and procedures, as delineated in this manual, pertain to the following:

- The policies and standards of practice for STARS TA consultants
- The facility eligibility and request for STARS TA process
- The STARS TA intake process
- The diagnostic assessment procedures
- The development of the STARS TA service plan
- The delivery of the STARS TA services
- The evaluation of STARS TA services
- The record keeping and reporting requirements
- The operation of the database system

## *II. Guiding Principles*

It is important to have a set of guiding principles that provide a basis upon which the policies and operating procedures are developed. The guiding principles established at the onset of the development process by the STARS TA organizations in collaboration with DPW and KURC include:

- II. 1** The STARS Technical Assistance (STARS TA) organizations are responsible for providing and coordinating consulting services under the Keystone STARS quality improvement initiative. The STARS TA organizations provide the technical assistance services to child care facilities in all the domains of service: program/learning environment; family and community partnerships; administration/business practices; and health and safety.
- II. 2** In the delivery of technical assistance services to Keystone STARS facilities, the STARS TA organizations collaborate with and do not duplicate the services of:
  - Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Child Day Care
  - Department of Public Welfare, Regional Licensing Offices
  - Child Care Resource Developers (CCRDs) and the Community Planning for Early Care & Education groups
  - KURC environment rating scale assessment team
  - Keystone STARS evaluation team
  - Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS)
  - PA Pathways, including training organizations and the Service Delivery Area (SDA) Coordinators
- II. 3** A framework of continuous quality improvement (CQI) lays the foundation for the implementation of the technical assistance system. CQI places an emphasis on organizational learning, which occurs when child care facilities establish procedures for routine information and data gathering and assessment, followed by decision making based on these data.
- II. 4** STARS TA is an intensive, one-on-one service provided to a child care facility to enable the facility to meet specific Keystone STARS performance standards. A Keystone STARS facility may either be self-referred to receive STARS TA or referred by their Child Care Resource Developer (CCRD).
- II. 5** STARS TA consultants have documented knowledge, skills, and experience in the Keystone STARS content areas to deliver research and evidence-based technical assistance, using culturally sensitive and relationship-based practices.

- II. 6** The relationship between the STARS TA organization and the facility is established through a negotiation process. In establishing this relationship, the STARS TA organization is culturally sensitive, uses a strength-based approach, and focuses on the individual needs of the facility. As a result of this negotiation, the direction of technical assistance, approaches to be utilized, degree of involvement, and placement of technical assistance consultants is established.
- II. 7** All eligible STARS facilities are served based on availability of resources, using established criteria for assessing the priority for delivery of technical assistance to a facility.
- II. 8** Organizational commitment is an essential element in the change process. The leadership within each child care facility must make a formal commitment to STARS TA to ensure that technical assistance efforts are fully supported, and that continuous quality improvement is established as an overall organizational goal.
- II. 9** Technical assistance is provided to facilities that demonstrate readiness to receive more intensive quality improvement services. The level of readiness is determined by the degree to which the facility: recognizes the need for change; has the skills, knowledge, and resources to support change; and is committed to the change process.
- II. 10** The STARS TA organizations designate a “single point of contact” (SPOC) for a facility to maintain continuity between the STARS TA services and the other services of the Keystone STARS program delivery system.
- II. 11** The STARS TA organization keeps paperwork both complete and streamlined, and integrates documentation and reporting with other parts of the Keystone STARS system.
- II. 12** The STARS TA service is continuously evaluated and the results of the evaluation are utilized to determine system changes over time.

## *III. Consultant Policies and Standards of Practice*

Each STARS TA organization has a pool of consultants, both internal and external to their organization, who provide the technical assistance to STARS facilities eligible to receive service. The following policies pertain to the assignment of consultants to a facility, the standards of best practice, and other guidelines for the STARS TA consultants.

### **III. 1 Assignment of Consultants**

It is the responsibility of STARS TA organizations to assign consultants to a facility. The identification and assignment of consultants should:

- Assist facilities in meeting the performance standards in Keystone STARS by developing and working on a specific service plan.
- Match resources with declared needs of the facility.
- Use funds and resources wisely to maximize available services.
- Provide high quality intensive one-on-one service using culturally sensitive, strength-based approaches consistent with the guiding principles.
- Use salaried staff before outsourcing, when possible.

In identifying a consultant to assign to a facility STARS TA organizations may consider multiple factors including, but not limited to:

- Prior or current relationships between facilities and consultants.
- The requirement to subcontract a portion of the services with qualified, effective subcontractors.
- The need to purchase non-in-house expertise as needed by facility.
- Location of facility in relationship to consultant.
- Potential conflict of interest.

To this end, the STARS organizations should be familiar with strengths, locations and relationships of the consultants in their local systems.

### **III. 2 Standards of Best Practice**

All consultants are to be trained in the specific procedures of the STARS TA service and processes within the realm of the Keystone STARS performance standards.

In addition, child care consultants are professionals that:

- Have received training in adult development and utilize adult learning principles in their work with child care facilities.

- Can serve as a model for excellence in developmentally appropriate practice in the early childhood field.
- Stay current in research and best practice in the area of their expertise.
- Incorporate reflective practice in their technical assistance methodology.
- Maintain an atmosphere of anti-bias and respect for diversity.
- Use a strengths-based approach in providing technical assistance.
- Recognize and acknowledge that caregivers are the experts regarding their own programs.
- Understand that the relationship between a consultant and caregiver is key to achieving desired outcomes and that learning occurs through relationships.
- Believe that caregivers are capable and have a role and responsibility in relationship development.
- Do all that is necessary with each facility to establish and maintain a positive working relationship built on trust and honesty.
- Support a caregiver's transition from a relationship of interdependence with the consultant to one of independence.
- Are mindful of the personal development stages of both caregivers and consultants, since being at different developmental stages can affect relationships.
- Maintain confidentiality from facility to facility and sharing information within a facility only on a need-to-know basis.
- Work to foster reflection and problem-solving abilities of caregivers.
- Empower/enable each facility to move forward in the change process, facilitating the process by acting as a support and a resource.
- Maintain accurate and complete paperwork on the consulting work, keeping to all deadlines set with the facilities and their STARS TA organization.
- Respect protégés beliefs, including those they disagree with and work to make progress, not perfection.
- Respect and follow each program's communication system and chain of command.
- Emphasize the importance of:
  - ✓ providing care that is sensitive and responsive to children's needs
  - ✓ interactions that are respectful and supportive
  - ✓ providing opportunities for children to explore and discover
  - ✓ enhancing everyday routines to provide one-on-one interactions and "learning moments"
  - ✓ creating environments that are warm, inviting, and stimulating
  - ✓ learning through play
- Act as a catalyst for change.

- Model behaviors and interactions, demonstrate techniques, and make suggestions during observations.
- Share teaching strategies or information about early childhood caregiving and developmentally appropriate practices.
- Share information with staff about quality program procedures, guidelines, and expectations.
- Offer support by active listening and by sharing own experiences based on a caregiver's needs.
- Give guidance and ideas about topics requested by staff or situations observed.
- Link staff to appropriate resources.
- Schedule observations and meetings with staff to occur at different times of the day.
- Avoid gossiping about children, families, or program staff, and guide staff towards professional strategies for resolving problems.

### **III. 3 Consultant Required Codes of Conduct**

STARS TA consultants have other specific requirements that govern their behavior. The required codes of conduct include:

- STARS TA consultants always have a staff person with them when they are with children at the facility. They may not be counted as part of a ratio group and may not be left alone with the children.
- STARS TA consultants may not change diapers or assist in toileting procedures in any way.
- STARS TA consultants are a mandated reporter if they suspect child abuse.
- STARS TA consultants schedule onsite visit times and dates with protégés ahead of time -- they do not arrive unexpectedly. Remember, consultants are guests in their classrooms and facilities.
- STARS TA consultants let directors know that programs are to be in compliance with DPW Day Care Regulations at all times and if blatant violations of health and safety standards are observed, they are required to report it to the DPW regional licensing office. A blatant violation is translated as a common-sense concern or observation that children may be in danger, or at risk, in their settings. If a violation is observed, consultants should also advise the STARS TA lead organization that a complaint was registered.

## IV. Eligibility and Request for STARS TA

The eligibility and request for STARS TA process has been designed with the intent that Keystone STARS facilities have open and easy access to technical assistance services. A copy of the *Request for STARS TA* form is in Appendix C and the following provides the set of policies and procedures associated with this process.

### IV. 1 Eligibility for STARS TA

Any licensed or registered center, group, and/or home-based provider that has made application to Keystone STARS (KS) and been awarded a STAR level is eligible to apply for STARS TA. In addition, to be eligible to receive STARS TA, a KS facility is required to:

- Complete the KS Core Training Series, consisting of the appropriate Environment Rating Scale (ERS) training, the CBK/PDR for Directors training, and the training on Developing a Facility Training Plan (or in SFY 04/05, the training on Developing a Child Care Quality Improvement and Facility Training Plan, which will replace the FTP training).
- Have served 5% of the total number of children enrolled whose care was subsidized by the Child Care Information Services (CCIS) or the County Assistance Office (CAO) at any time during the year prior to the request for STARS TA. In the case of a FDCH one subsidized child must have been served at any time during the year prior to the request for STARS TA.

### IV. 2 Priorities for Service

Initially, STARS facilities that are preliminarily accepted to receive STARS TA are served based on a first come, first served basis, until such time that additional criteria are needed to determine priorities for receiving STARS TA. The priorities for service, if there is a waiting list, include:

- **First Priority Group:** Priority for service is given to STARS facilities moving from a STAR Two to STAR Three and from STAR Three to STAR Four. These facilities are placed in order by date of their completed request submitted to the STARS TA organization. Once date ordered, the list is divided into two subgroups: **1 A:** the first subgroup consists of those facilities referred by the CCRD; **1 B:** the second subgroup consists of all other facilities.
- **Second Priority Group:** STAR Ones moving to a STAR Two are eligible for STARS TA but are not a priority; hence they become the second priority group. As with the first priority

group, facilities in this category are separated into **2A** and **2B** subgroups representing those referred by the CCRD (2A) and all others (2B).

- **Third Priority Group:** STAR Four (accredited) are eligible for STARS TA, but are the lowest (third) priority. This third priority group is divided into two subgroups representing those referred by the CCRD (**3A**) and all others (**3B**).

If a situation arises where there are two or more facilities with the same position on the waiting list (based on the criteria above, which detail the method for creating a waiting list), then the following additional criteria are taken into consideration when STARS TA organizations consider the waiting list position. These conditions fall into two major categories:

### 1. Fair and Equitable Distribution of Resources to Facilities:

- *Equitable distribution by geography and programs:* This may be an issue in some of the larger geographic regions. If STARS TA organizations are receiving requests from various locations in the region that they serve, STARS TA organizations serve facilities in all areas in an equitable geographical distribution. Also, for STARS TA organizations affiliated with child care programs, preference for service may **not** be given based on those affiliations.
- *Returning facilities that successfully completed STARS TA service plan.* These facilities may be given lower priority if other facilities meet initial criteria. However, the facility may be given higher priority if they are very close to achieving the next STAR level and need TA services to complete certification.
- *Returning facilities that were inactive and/or in a deferred status (during the pending stage).* If facilities decide to reactivate their request for STARS TA within 6 months, they are placed on the waiting list according to the date at which they resume their request for service. For facilities that move to a deferred or inactive status due to problems needing correction for meaningful participation in the TA process, if the necessary corrections are not made, they are not be a considered a priority for TA service.
- *Referrals or program deadlines imposed by other Keystone STARS partnering agencies (CCRD, DPW Licensing, PA Pathways.):* If a CCRD STARS manager refers a facility that is very close to achieving the next STAR level for TA services to complete certification, the TA organization gives the facility higher priority.

### 2. Effective, Efficient Management of STARS TA Resources

- *Fiscal constraints:* If a STARS TA organization is nearing the end of a fiscal year and funding is limited, the organization gives priority to facilities that require less time and expense to meet their need.
- *Availability and capacity of consultants:* If primary consultants are carrying full case loads, facilities remain on the waiting list until a primary consultant has an opening in their case load or specialty consulting, if needed, is offered first. If a specialty consultant is needed in a facility for a specialty area (i.e., health & safety), but that consultant is not available, a facility is placed on the waiting list until a specialty consultant in that expertise is available.
- *Initial Assessment of needs/readiness/commitment:* The following criteria are used to assess this factor:
  - ✓ If a facility does not return phone calls for 30 days or more, the facility is removed from STARS TA services and placed on closed status. The facility receives a letter of notification.
  - ✓ If a director is not prompt in getting back to the STARS TA organization because the facility CEO is not responsive to STARS TA, the facility is moved to a deferred status (for facilities still in the pending request stage) or to the inactive status (for facilities in the approved request stage). The facility receives a letter to inform it of the move and until the facility gets buy in from the appropriate people, it may not return to active status.
  - ✓ If a facility needs prerequisite training to be ready for STARS TA, the facility receives a letter moving them onto the waiting list and is placed on inactive status until they complete required training.
  - ✓ If a facility fails to meet STARS TA criteria for continuation of services, the facility is removed from TA services and receives a letter of notification that it is placed on closed status.
- *Intensity of service required:* A facility that requires intensive services is given higher or lower priority depending on the first three criteria. If funds, consultants, and time are available, a facility that requires intensive services is given priority so that it is possible to help the facility move through the STARS TA process within the fiscal year. If it is near the end of the fiscal year, funds are limited, and consultants have limited availability, a facility that needs minimal TA to achieve its goal is given higher priority.

- *Multiple versus single need:* If it is near the end of the fiscal year, funds are limited, and consultants have limited available fiscal resources, facilities with single needs receive priority over facilities with multiple needs.
- *Participation of facilities in other quality enhancement programs:* Facilities who are participating in other quality enhancement programs receive a lower priority for TA services, unless the other quality enhancement program cannot address their specific area of need.

#### IV. 3 Allocation of Hours of Technical Assistance

STAR TA organizations may allocate an average of 75 hours of technical assistance to the facilities that are accepted to receive STARS TA. Hence, some STARS facilities may require less than 75 hours to meet their technical assistance needs, while others may need more. It is important for the STARS TA organizations to carefully monitor the allocation of hours to their facilities to ensure that they are not exceeding their budget for the year and that, on the average, they are delivering 75 hours of technical assistance to the facilities they are serving. Any exceptions to this policy (i.e., the need for a STARS TA organization to exceed their average of 75 hours) will be determined by the Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Child Day Care.

#### IV. 4 Referral to STARS TA

Any STAR eligible facility can independently make a decision to apply for STARS TA. Making a request for TA services does not require a referral from the CCRD STARS Manager. The CCRD STARS Managers, however, can make referrals to STARS TA when a facility is unable to meet certain requirements of the Keystone STARS standards. Such a referral takes precedence on the STARS TA waiting list.

The STARS TA organizations maintain a record of referrals with respect to the referral source, the reason for referral; and the outcome of the referral, as defined below.

- **Referral source:** a self referral; CCRD referral; or other.
- **Reason for referral:** general information about STARS TA and what it involves; asked for a STARS TA form; CCRD referral for ERS consultation; CCRD referral when recertified at a lower STAR level; CCRD referral for other Keystone STARS standards; other.
- **Referral outcome:** referral turned into STARS completed request on <date>; referral turned into incomplete STARS TA request on <date>; referral did not result in any action on the part of the facility.

#### IV. 5 Request for STARS TA

STARS TA is explained specifically in the Keystone STARS self-study package as a potential service to facilities as they work through the STARS standards. The *Request for STARS TA* form can be accessed on-line at both the PA Pathways and CCRD websites. As well, the form may be distributed by STARS TA organizations along with all the partners in Keystone STARS. These partners can encourage facilities to learn more about STARS TA (see Appendix B: *FAQ About STARS TA*) and to make a request for STARS TA.

The *Request for STARS TA* form (see Appendix C) is a streamlined, one-page form that when completed, is sent directly to the facility's designated STARS TA organization. STARS TA organizations are geographically distributed across the Commonwealth with designated service delivery areas (see Appendix A for a copy of the STARS TA map showing these service delivery areas). A Keystone STARS facility can access the services of the STARS TA organization that serves the area in which the facility is located.

#### **IV. 6 Receipt of Requests for STARS TA**

STARS TA organizations date stamp the requests upon receipt. An initial review of the requests determines if the form is complete—i.e., it has all required fields on the form completed, has the required attachments, and has the required signatures.

Requests that are not complete are either returned to facilities with an explanation as to the missing elements or, if it is a simple matter, the STARS TA organization may call the STARS facility and request the missing information. For requests that cannot be completed over the phone, the STARS TA organization sends a letter identifying the missing elements on the request form (see Appendix D: *STARS TA Incomplete Request Letter*). Information that is completed on the form is entered into the STARS TA database, but no further action is taken on any request until the STARS TA organization has a completed Request for STARS TA form.

#### **IV. 7 Communication Between CCRDs and STARS TA Organizations**

The CCRDs send the monthly lists of the participating Keystone STARS facilities as well as additional information, meeting dates, sessions, etc. that will inform the STARS TA of CCRD STARS management activities.

Upon receipt of a request that is complete, the STARS TA organization informs the designated CCRD STARS single point of contact (SPOC) that a STARS facility has made a request for STARS TA. STARS TA will inform the CCRDs every other week (via a spreadsheet) of facilities who have been accepted in STARS TA (Letter of Agreement is executed).

Further, STARS TA organizations inform the CCRDs about:

- Facilities whose TA services have been withdrawn or closed.
- STARS TA need for a joint session between them, the facility, and the STARS Manager, if necessary.

## V. Intake Process

During the intake process a STARS TA organization makes an initial determination of the appropriateness of TA services for the applicant. This intake process consists of an initial call and, if necessary, an initial visit to the facility. It is important for the STARS TA organization to complete as much of the intake process during the initial call and to identify the assigned consultant as soon as possible during the intake process. If feasible, the consultant that delivers the technical assistance is assigned after the initial call and then sent to conduct the initial visit.

However, STARS TA organizations are given the flexibility of establishing their own internal structure and assignment of staff to conduct the intake process. For the purposes of this policy and procedures manual, the label of "intake specialist" is used generically to identify the person(s) within a STARS TA organization that are responsible for conducting some or all parts of this process.

### V. 1 Initial Call to Facilities Requesting STARS TA

A STARS TA organization assigns an intake specialist to review a request for technical assistance and to complete the intake process. This STARS TA intake specialist calls the facility that has submitted a complete Request for STARS TA form to make a determination as to the appropriateness of STARS TA (at this point in time), and to set up an initial visit, if appropriate.

The intake specialist shall make an initial call to the facility within 5 business days of the receipt of the complete mailed request. The STARS TA intake specialist documents all attempts to reach the facility and the disposition of each call (see Appendix E: *Initial Contact/Call Log*). For example, the dispositions of call attempts include:

- The attempt successfully reaches the facility contact person and the STARS TA intake specialist is able to discuss the request.
- The facility contact person can not be reached/or take the call and a message is left for the contact person to return the call.
- The facility contact person can not be reached/or can not take the call and the STARS TA representative is informed about a time to call again.
- Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

If the intake specialist is unable to reach the facility contact person to initiate the intake process within 20 days of receipt of the complete request, the STARS TA intake specialist sends a letter advising the facility that their "slot" for STARS TA will be assigned to another facility unless they contact the STARS TA organization within a specified time period (see Appendix F for a copy of

this *Thirty-Day Letter*). This time period should not exceed 10 business days from the date of the letter. Also, the facility is informed that a new request may be submitted at any time.

## V. 2 Review of Request and Possible Dispositions

During the initial call to the STARS facility, the STARS TA intake specialist discusses the facility's request and understanding of the benefits of STARS TA. The *STARS TA Intake Log* (see Appendix I) provides a template for the information that is to be gathered during the initial call. This call includes:

- Open-ended questions to review the request (i.e., to clarify the goals and the assistance that the facility is seeking; to clarify what help the facility wants and what they think the benefits will be).
- Discussion to clarify if any other steps have been taken to address the need (i.e., other efforts the facility has made such as training, other quality improvement efforts, etc.)
- Discussion to clarify where the facility is in the Keystone STARS process (i.e., has the facility completed the ERS self assessment, had an ERS validation visit, had a CCRD certification visit, attended a Keystone STARS presentation. etc.)
- A determination if the facility should go elsewhere before they seek STARS TA (i.e., referred to the STARS Manager to learn about the performance standards, etc.)
- Discussion of the facility's expectations and understanding of the STARS TA services.

As a result of the discussion during this first phone call, the STARS TA intake specialist should have enough information to make a decision about proceeding with TA (i.e., to set up the first visit) or to refer the facility elsewhere.

Specifically, the possible results of the initial call can be one or more of the following:

- **Preliminarily accepted to move forward in the STARS TA process.** At this point in time and based on the initial review of the request for service, the STARS intake specialist considers the need and request for STARS TA to be appropriate. If appropriate, the next steps in the STARS TA process—i.e., the initial visit is set up. If a determination is made after the initial call that technical assistance is not an appropriate service for the facility at this point in time, then the initial visit is not made.
- **Defer Request for STARS TA.** The facility decides to defer the development of a service plan for any number of reasons, such as time, resources, staffing issues, training, and staff buy-in.

- **Withdraw Request for STARS TA.** The facility decides to decline the request for TA services and therefore withdraws from the process for any number of reasons, such as time, resources, staffing issues, training, and staff buy-in.

For facilities that choose to defer or withdraw their Request for STARS TA, the STARS TA organization sends a letter to the facility as formal notification of the status (see Appendix G: *STARS TA Deferment Letter*, and Appendix H: *STARS TA Withdrawal Letter*). In addition to these possible dispositions for the STARS TA request, the STARS facility may be referred elsewhere, as specified below:

- **Referred to the CCRD STARS Manager.** This referral can be made if it is deemed appropriate that the facility access more information about Keystone STARS performance standards or access resources and supports available through the CCRD STARS Manager.
- **Referred to PA Pathways professional development system.** This referral can be for pre-requisite training before technical assistance can begin, for appropriate training that can be taken in conjunction with the initiation of technical assistance, or for appropriate training that may address the stated need on the Request for STARS TA form.
- **Referred to other resources available in the community.** This referral can be for resources that should be accessed prior to the beginning of technical assistance, for resources that will facilitate the technical assistance process, or for resources that will fully address the stated need on the Request for STARS TA form.
- **Referred to DPW Regional Office.** This referral can be for licensing and regulatory information or issues.

### V. 3 Facility Letter of Agreement

At the time of the initial call, if the intake specialist has determined that the STARS facility is preliminarily accepted to move forward with the STARS TA process, then the *Facility Letter of Agreement* (see Appendix J) is discussed. This agreement is signed by the Facility Director, Owner/CEO (if applicable), and the STARS TA Project Manager. The agreement makes the following explicit:

- The purpose of STARS TA to help the facility achieve specified knowledge areas or performance expectations of the Keystone STARS standards.
- The commitment of both the facility and STARS TA organization to the values of early childhood and school-age care and education.
- The 6-month timeframe for the delivery of technical assistance services.
- The responsibilities of the STARS TA organizations.
- The responsibilities of the STARS facility requesting STARS TA.

- The limitations of STARS TA service in that receiving it does not guarantee that the facility will achieve a higher star designation.
- The voluntary nature of STARS TA and the right of both parties to discontinue the service.

The STARS TA consultant will not proceed with any further steps to engage in a diagnostic process or develop a service plan until the *STARS TA Facility Letter of Agreement* is fully executed. If agreeable, the Facility Letter of Agreement is mailed to the facility so that it may be reviewed and signed by appropriate staff at the facility. Otherwise, it may be taken to the initial visit and reviewed there.

#### V. 4 Waiting List

If the facility's request for STARS TA is preliminarily accepted as appropriate, but the STARS TA organization is unable to move forward in the STARS TA process at this point in time, the facility will be put onto the waiting list (see section **IV. 2 Priorities for Service**). Reasons for being put onto a waiting list include, but may not be limited to:

- The STARS TA organization does not have the appropriate consultant available at this point in time to address the need as specified on the facility's application.
- The STARS TA organization does not have the sufficient funds to offer technical assistance to the facility at this point in time.
- Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

The decision to put a facility onto a waiting list may be made during the initial call or during the initial visit (e.g., if the full extent and focus of the technical assistance was not apparent during the initial call, then it may not be apparent that the STARS TA organization needs to put the facility on the waiting list until after the initial visit). The STARS TA organization sends a letter to the facility to formally notify them of their waiting list status (see Appendix K: *Waiting List Letter*).

A facility on a waiting list does not proceed with the Facility Letter of Agreement until such time that the facility moves off the waiting list and is ready to be served. At this point, the process for completing the intake is reactivated and proceeds with the intake activities that may not have been completed during the initial call.

#### V. 5 Initial Visit

The STARS TA intake specialist or assigned consultant makes an initial visit to the facility as scheduled (or as otherwise changed due to unforeseen circumstances). If the appointment cannot be scheduled within 30 days of the completion of the initial call, the consultant sends a *Thirty-Day Letter* (see Appendix F).

The preparation for, and outcomes of, this initial visit are documented on the *STARS TA Intake Log* (see Appendix I). The person scheduling the visit helps the facility identify materials/documents to have available that might be helpful and discuss in general what will occur during the visit. The areas covered in the initial visit are informed by, and build on, those addressed in the initial call. In general, the purpose of this initial visit is to:

- Provide the opportunity for introductions to provide contact information for the STARS TA consultant
- Review the STARS TA role and responsibilities.
- Review the facility's needs driving the request for service and assure the presenting problem is based on a specified knowledge area/performance expectation of the Keystone STARS standards
- Review the relevant information in the facility's file
- Seek permission to conduct pre-assessments, if necessary
- Discuss the consultation process including the use of goal setting and specification of tasks to be completed to prepare for next visits
- Explain the level of commitment required by the facility and the STARS TA commitment to the facility
- Identify any immediate training needs
- Identify any resource needs
- Tour the facility and meet the staff
- Obtain a signed copy of the Facility Letter of Agreement (a copy should be mailed ahead of time for facility signature; if necessary, the signed copy can be mailed to the STARS TA after the visit).

## **V. 6 Outcomes of Initial Visit**

As a result of this initial visit, the facility and STARS TA consultant may decide to move forward with the STARS TA process and begin to identify overall goal(s) for the service plan. Conversely, the facility and STARS TA may decide not to move forward for a number of reasons. Similar to the dispositions from the initial call, the facility may be referred to PA Pathways training, referred to other community resources, referred to the CCRD STARS Manager. As well, the facility may decide that commitment to the STARS TA process at this point in time is not feasible, given the roles, responsibilities, and requirements of all parties involved. The STARS facility may defer their development of a service plan for a specified time period (not to exceed 6 months), or may withdraw their application. Reasons for deferment or withdrawal include, but may not be limited to time, resources, staffing issues, training needs, staff buy-in, and other.

## VI. Diagnostic Process

Prior to formalizing a service plan for the STARS facility, the STARS TA organization may need to engage in an assessment process to determine the performance levels of the facility as it pertains to their specified area(s) of need (i.e., the program/learning environment, business/administrative practices, family and community partnerships and health and safety).

These pre-assessments provide a more accurate picture of the facility's level of performance and help to pinpoint the specific forms of technical assistance that can be provided to the facility. At the conclusion of the technical assistance process, a post assessment using the same tool(s) provides an accurate reflection of the degree to which the facility made progress in meeting expected levels of performance. The *STARS TA Diagnostic Assessments* form (see Appendix M) is used to record both the pre- and post-assessment scores.

### VI. 1 ERS Assessment Tools

The STARS TA organizations are free to use a variety of assessment tools, depending on the presenting request for TA services. However, the Harms and Clifford environment rating scales (ERS)—Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale -Revised (ECERS-R), Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R), School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS), and Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS)—serve as the primary set of tools to examine not only the learning environment, but other programmatic features as well, which are incorporated into the Keystone STARS performance standards. Depending on the need within a facility, it may be appropriate to only use selected subscales within these environment rating scales. Consultants are mindful about discussions of scores and are not to promise results on the Keystone STARS ERS assessments for STARS certification.

Given the current use of the ERS in the Keystone STARS quality initiative and the requirement that Star facilities conduct self assessments with these tools, some ERS results may be initially available to the STARS TA consultant. Benefits can be derived from discussions around how facilities perceive they are meeting indicators on the self assessment. Further, a STARS TA site may have ERS scores from an assessment completed by another quality initiative. Depending on how recent the ERS scores are and the degree to which the assessment was completed by a reliable observer, these scores may be used by the STARS TA consultant to develop a service plan.

## **VI. 2 Other Assessment Tools**

Other tools have been identified for STARS TA use, but these tools will be part of a total “tool kit” from which the TA consultants can make selections, as appropriate, for their use in assessing the level(s) of performance of a facility. Appendix L: *STARS TA Tool Kit*, provides an initial annotated bibliography of various tools that have been identified for use by the STARS TA organizations.

## **VI. 3 Use of Copyrighted Assessment Tools**

For each of the tools listed in the *STARS TA Tool Kit*, the bibliography includes information about the rights of use of these assessment tools by the STARS TA system. Since many of these assessment tools are copyrighted and not in the public domain their use may require written permission from the holder of the copyright.

STARS TA organizations are required to determine and secure the rights of use for any copyrighted tool they plan to use that is not listed in Appendix L.

## **VI. 4 Post Assessments**

Once a facility has completed all the action steps within its service plan, a post assessment using the same tool as for the pre-assessment will be conducted to determine the extent to which the facility has made significant progress in reaching higher levels of performance.

## VII. Service Plans

The overarching purpose of the service plan is to be explicit about the goals and objectives of the STARS TA intervention and who is responsible for what—e.g., specifying the domain area(s) where technical assistance is needed and details about the action steps that need to occur. It is a plan of action for the facility to achieve specific goals related to a particular area(s) of the Keystone STARS performance standards.

There is only one service plan for each Request for STARS TA that has been accepted to receive STARS TA. The service plan should include:

- Basic details about the goals of the technical assistance service.
- The action steps to achieve the goals.
- A designation of the responsible persons to complete the action steps.
- Review dates for each action step or set of steps.
- Determination as to whether each action step has been completed, partially completed, or not completed.
- Final determination as to whether each goal was met, partially met, or not met.

See Appendix N for a copy of the *STARS TA Service Plan*.

### VII. 1 Development of Service Plan

The service plan is developed jointly by the STARS TA consultant and the STARS facility after review of all materials, including the Request for STARS TA along with the STARS TA intake information and any pre-assessments (if completed). The parties analyze the information and results and determine the priorities for technical assistance. These priorities are specific to the Keystone STARS performance standards, which is important for the parties to keep in mind. Further, the service plan should reflect realistic as well as clearly stated goals and action steps that can be completed in the timeframe allotted for STARS TA (i.e., an average of 75 hours of technical assistance over a 6-month time frame.)

### VII. 2 Assignment of Primary vs. Secondary Consultants

Each STARS TA organization may implement procedures internal to their own organization as it pertains to the responsibilities for intake and the assignment of consultants (i.e., consultants that are internal or external to the STARS TA organization).

However, at the point in which the STARS facility is in the process of developing a service plan, if not already done, the STARS TA organization needs to assign a “primary consultant” to the STARS

facility. This primary consultant serves as the “single point of contact” (SPOC) for the STARS facility when questions or issues arise. And, depending on the domain area(s) of service, the primary consultant may or may not provide all of the technical assistance to the STARS facility. If the primary consultant’s expertise is not in the area in which the facility needs technical assistance, then the STARS TA organization can assign one or more secondary or specialty consultants to work with the STARS facility (see III. 1 Assignment of Consultants).

### **VII. 3 Sign-offs on the Service Plan**

Once the service plan is completed, a number of signatures are required—the facility director, the owner/CEO of the facility if different from the director, and the STARS TA primary consultant. It is important for owners/CEOs to sign the service plans to ensure that persons in these positions are fully aware of the necessary steps involved in working toward a star level. Further, it is likely that parts of the service plan will require the “buy in” of the facility’s highest administrative officer, without which a STARS facility may not be able to move forward.

### **VII. 4 Changes in the Service Plan Over Time**

Since there is only one service plan per Request for STARS TA, the service plan is a document that once established, can be modified over time. Technical assistance to achieve a specified knowledge area or performance expectation of the Keystone STARS standards involves a change process, which is outlined in the service plan. However, given the dynamic nature of change processes, there may be circumstances that require modification in either the goals or actions steps that are initially specified on the service plan.

When such a change becomes necessary, the STARS TA consultant, in collaboration with the STARS facility, can continue to add revised or new goals and action steps. In doing so, the service plan record must document the outcomes from initial goal(s) and action steps—i.e., if the goals were met, partially met, or not met and the reason(s) why.

## VIII. Delivery of Technical Assistance Service

Both the Keystone STARS facility and the STARS TA organization have specific roles and responsibilities in the delivery of the technical assistance services. The Facility Letter of Agreement details these and requires that the child care facility's highest administrative authority sign off on the agreement to use STARS TA services. Also, during this delivery phase, the STARS TA organization implements a number of monitoring procedures to ensure that its consultants are delivering the service with integrity and providing the service as required.

### VIII. 1 Status of STARS TA Service

Prior to the point in which the Facility Letter of Agreement has been executed, the STARS facility is still in the stage of having a "pending request for service." As specified in section, **V. 2 Review of Request and Possible Dispositions**, a facility with a complete request moves through the intake process where The STARS TA organization decides to either approve or not approve the request for service. If approved, the facility may decide to move forward with the development of a service plan, and in doing so, have the Facility Letter of Agreement executed.

As a request moves through the pending stage, the possible statuses of a request may include:

- **Incomplete:** A facility has submitted a Request for STARS TA, but the request is incomplete. The reason a form is incomplete is identified.
- **Not eligible:** The facility cannot be served through STARS TA because it does not meet the entrance criteria, which include:
  - ✓ Meeting the 5% subsidy rule.
  - ✓ Completing the prerequisite Keystone STARS Core Training Series
- **Intake Process:** A complete Request for STARS TA has been submitted and the facility is eligible for STARS TA; this status includes all activity associated with the initial call, initial visit, and/or the assignment of a primary consultant. A facility holds this status until the decision until it has been approved for STARS TA or the request is moved to a waiting list, it asks for a deferment or it withdraws.
- **Waiting list:** The facility is eligible for STARS TA, but cannot be served at this point due to resources not being available. The possible reasons for placing a facility on a waiting list include:
  - ✓ The required TA consultant is not available.
  - ✓ The financial resources for TA are exhausted.
  - ✓ Other (need to be specified).\_\_\_\_\_

- **Defer:** The facility decides (or it is mutually decided with the STARS TA organization) that moving forward with STARS TA is not appropriate at this time. The facility has 6 months to come back into the system without submitting a new application. The reasons for deferment are to be specified.
- **Withdrawn:** The facility decides to withdraw the Request for STARS TA. The reasons for withdrawal are to be specified.
- **Pending FLA:** The facility has completed intake process and the STARS TA organization is waiting to receive the signed and executed Facility Letter of Agreement in order to begin the development of the service plan. Once the plan is received, the facility moves to the "Approved Request" stage.

The STARS TA organization informs the CCRD STARS SPOC of the initial status of a facility and keeps the CCRD updated as it changes.

Once this Facility Letter of Agreement is signed by all parties, the request for service moves from the pending stage to the approved stage.

During the approved stage, the three possible statuses of the STARS TA service include:

- **Active status:** A facility is actively participating in the development or implementation of a service plan in collaboration with a STARS TA consultant.
- **Inactive status:** A facility has decided to suspend the development or implementation of a service plan due to a variety of circumstances, which may or may not be beyond its control. Reasons for inactive status can include: a center physically moves to a new location, major staffing issues, major staff health issues, and acts of God or natural disasters. The inactive status:
  - ✓ Will be granted only once per application and will not exceed 6 months.
  - ✓ Time frame (2-6 months) will be determined by mutual agreement between the facility and the STARS TA organization.
  - ✓ Will not require a new application to return to active status if the decision to return is within 6 months from the date of the decision to move to inactive status.
  - ✓ Will place the facility on the waiting list according to the date of their request to return to active status.
  - ✓ Will require the facility to contact the STARS TA Program Manager to request a return to active status.
  - ✓ Will suspend the original service plan, which will be reviewed and used upon return to active status.
  - ✓ Will not result in additional hours of service beyond the original service plan.

- ✓ Is the facility's decision, but with understanding that the STARS TA consultant may provide some guidance in the feasibility of continuing or voluntarily closing STARS TA services.
  - ✓ Will require written notification and confirmation (see Appendix O, *STARS TA Inactive Letter*).
  - ✓ Will require the facility to check in prior to the agreed upon return date
- **Closed Status:** A STARS TA facility has a closed status when the service plan is complete, the facility voluntarily withdraws from STARS TA, and/or the STARS TA organization discontinues services to the facility (involuntary withdrawal). A STARS TA organization may decide to discontinue service if one or more of the following criteria are met.
    - ✓ The facility is no longer in Keystone STARS.
    - ✓ CCRD terminates Keystone STARS designation for a facility.
    - ✓ The facility fails to meet terms and conditions of the Facility Letter of Agreement.
    - ✓ The facility fails to participate in timely development and/or implementation of a service plan.

Regardless of the reason, when a facility voluntarily or involuntarily withdraws from TA service, a face-to-face with the STARS TA SPOC is preferred. Further, written notification and justification of action and signatures of both parties are required.

The STARS TA organization will inform the CCRD STARS SPOC when STARS TA is discontinued. If the STARS TA service plan was successfully completed, the *Certificate of Completion* (Appendix S) will be sent.

## VIII.2 Timeframe for Delivery of Services

The service plan details not only the goals and action steps associated with each application for technical assistance, but also the timeframe for delivery. However, in the development of this service plan, STARS TA consultants should use an average of 75 hours of technical assistance, over a 6-month time period as their guideline. Out of the 75 hours of technical assistance, the STARS TA consultant includes time spent in preparation as well as office time to complete paperwork. Travel time is not included in the 75 hours.

At the completion of a service plan within the timeframe allotted, it is possible under special circumstances to continue with STARS TA for an additional specified time period. For example, if the STARS TA consultant and facility think it is necessary to continue with the technical assistance services to ensure that the facility is prepared to achieve a specified knowledge area or performance expectation of the Keystone STARS standards, the STARS TA organization may extend the service plan, depending on availability of funds and consultant time.

### VIII. 3 Record of STARS TA Services

The STARS TA consultant(s) assigned to a STARS facility keep record of their contacts with the facility through the use of the *STARS TA Contact Log* (see Appendix P). This log is used to record and document information related to the purpose and specific activities associated with a face-to-face contact, phone contact, or correspondence (e.g., mail, e-mail, or faxes). The contact log also summarizes the content of the contact, records progress and barriers to progress, records next steps for the facility and consultant and identifies referrals.

The data from this log is entered into the STARS TA web database in a timely manner, as soon after the contact as is possible. Each STARS TA organization has the flexibility to establish procedures with their consultants regarding the data entry responsibilities.

### VIII. 4 Monitoring of STARS TA Service

Each STARS TA organization has the responsibility to monitor the delivery of service to STARS facilities by its consultant. This on-going process should occur during the entire technical assistance progression. STARS TA organizations should use strategies individualized to what works best with each consultant and facility in their region. The monitoring strategies include, but may not be limited to:

- Conducting on-site observations of consulting process.
- Reviewing each consultant's schedule.
- Conducting informal phone calls to facilities and consultants during technical assistance process.
- Requiring each consultant to complete a self-evaluation and reviewing those self-evaluations with the consultant (see Appendix Q for copy of *Consultant Feedback Form*).
- Reviewing consultant cases and discussing strategy with the consultant.
- Reviewing of paperwork submitted.
- Conducting exit interviews with facilities (via e-mail, phone, or in person).
- Sharing facility feedback forms with consultants (see Appendix R for copy of *STARS TA Feedback Form*).
- Determining consultant attendance at meetings and/or training.
- Reviewing consultant qualifications (TQAS approval, training attended, license renewals, etc.).
- Requiring e-mail "check in" with facility and consultants.
- Reviewing and approving service plans before facility sign-off.
- Communicating with ECELS regarding performance of health consultants.

## VIII. 5 Awarding of Training Hours for STARS TA Service

Individuals in facilities participating in Keystone STARS and receiving the STARS TA services can “count” some of the time spent with the consultant as training required under the Keystone STARS performance standards. The guidelines related to awarding training hours include the following:

- Face-to-face contact with caregivers that is informative to the caregiver counts as training hours. Time the consultant spends touring the facility, observing a classroom, preparing documents, etc. is not counted.
- At the completion of the service plan, the Trainer Quality Assurance System (TQAS) approved STARS TA consultant awards certificates to eligible caregivers at the facility.
- Caregivers may be awarded up to 6 hours of training in a year for the first 6 hours of eligible STARS TA. Certificates are not awarded for less than 1 hour of eligible STARS TA. The STARS TA consultant forwards information to PA Pathways about the training hours awarded.
- Training is coded as X3 (mentoring session).
- Caregivers are to look at how their work in STARS TA is reflected in their PDR. Caregivers might want to list the areas of STARS TA as goals in the PDR. STARS TA is meant to be a very specific, high level of training that relates to providing higher quality services to children and families and results in achieving a higher STAR level designation by the facility.

## *IX. Evaluation of Technical Assistance Service*

The evaluation tasks include assessing STARS TA administration and fiscal accountability, creation and maintenance of partnerships, implementation processes, service outcomes, and level of caregivers' satisfaction with the STARS TA services.

### **IX. 1 Responsibility for Evaluation Tasks**

The ongoing evaluation of STARS TA is the shared responsibility of:

- **The Department of Public Welfare:** DPW assesses all aspects of STARS TA services through on-site visits, reviews of service plans, and analysis of reports. As a result, the Department provides STARS TAs with feedback and works through KURC and STARS TA organizations to ensure that the STARS TA initiative is consistent with the broader goals of STARS and is integrated with the STARS continuum of services.
- **Keystone University Research Corporation:** KURC is responsible for the immediate oversight of contract and fiscal matters, development and maintenance of the STARS TA database, and the formal analysis of evaluation data.
- **STARS TA organizations:** STARS TA organizations are responsible for the immediate oversight of contract and fiscal matters with partnering consultants, oversight and management of the local implementation processes, and oversight of the delivery of direct service to child care facilities. These oversight and evaluation responsibilities include, but may not be limited to, the reporting of specific data and insights related to the implementation of their service (e.g., tips, lessons learned, best practices).

At a minimum, on a semi-annual and annual basis, an evaluation report will be prepared by KURC, with input from the STARS TA organizations, to summarize the results of the STARS TA effort. This report is to be used to assess implementation strategies and outcomes of the STARS TA service. Where necessary, program modification is based on the analysis and interpretation of these data.

### **IX. 2 Contract and Fiscal Administration**

All contractors are responsible to ensure that their subcontractors are performing according to contract expectations by delivering timely and high quality services to child care facilities according to the guiding principles and implementation processes outlines in this manual.

Fiscal management practices must be in place to ensure that there is documentation available to verify that services were delivered and that billing for service hours is accurate. Year end audits

and on-site visits to STARS TA organizations may serve as two of the means for evaluating these practices. The most recent STARS TA contract has a more complete description of administrative expectations.

### **IX. 3 Creation and Maintenance of Partnerships**

DPW values and acknowledges the diverse programs that may already exist within local communities. There are community-based agencies that are already funded to provide assistance to small businesses, early childhood programs and the children and families served by those programs.

The STARS TA organization consultants are to be versed in and have information about services that would assist child care facilities and are required to make referrals as appropriate. Appropriate use of referrals in the context of the service plan will be assessed to ensure non-duplication of service with other STARS partners and leveraging of services with other community-based programs.

### **IX. 4 Process Evaluation**

DPW may elect to conduct site visits to become familiar with direct service approaches that are used by each STARS TA organization. Through meetings and shared reports, STARS TA organizations, DPW and KURC will provide one another with feedback about what is working and what could be improved with regard to the administration of the system and the delivery of direct services to facilities. The STARS TA Policy and Procedures Manual will evolve from these discussions.

### **IX. 5 Assessing STARS TA Outcomes**

Assessing the outcomes of STARS TA focuses on the effectiveness of technical assistance in helping the STARS facility meet Keystone STARS performance standards as reflected in the STARS TA service plan. This is determined through these measurements:

- **Service Plan Goal Achievement:** The STARS TA consultant makes a determination if each of the service plans goals were met, partially met, or not met and provides supporting comments.
- **Pre and Post Diagnostic Assessment:** The STARS TA consultant records both the pre and post scores of the diagnostic assessments to determine if the facility showed improvement. When the ERS is used by the facility and the consultant for pre and post assessment, the scores will be compared to the ERS validation scores. NOTE: Only those ERS subscales and indicators that are addressed in the service plan will be used as a measurement of the effectiveness of STARS TA. A complete ERS assessment by the STARS TA consultant is

not an expectation and other assessment tools may be used, see section VI of the operations manual for a list of other recommended tools.

## **IX. 6 Satisfaction with STARS TA Service**

Facilities are asked at the beginning of the STARS TA service to agree to participate in the post TA evaluation. The caregivers' satisfaction with STARS TA services includes an assessment of the performance of individual consultants that worked with a facility (see Appendix R for the *STARS TA Feedback Form*). The facility assessment of the STARS TA is completed by all staff in the facility that had involvement with the STARS TA process. This might include the owner/CEO, the director, group supervisors, assistant group supervisors, and/or aides.

As well, individual consultants provide an assessment of the success and dynamics of the STARS TA service (see Appendix Q for the *Consultant Feedback Form*).

KURC has the responsibility to analyze these evaluations and provide reports for each STARS TA area.

## **IX. 7 Evaluation Questions**

In addition to the methods of assessment described above, there are a number of questions about the extent to which the outcomes and satisfaction are affected by the following set of variables.

### ***Variables relevant to the technical assistance:***

- Frequency of contact with STARS TA consultant(s)
- Percent of time in face-to-face contact versus other contact
- Education level of consultant
- Performance of consultant (measured via *STARS TA Feedback Form*)
- Facility satisfaction with services provided by the consultant
- Domain(s) of intervention
- Scope of intervention (number of goals to accomplish and number of hours needed to accomplish goals);

### ***Variables relevant to the facility receiving the technical assistance service:***

- Type of facility
- Size of facility
- Years in operation
- Geographic location
- Director's education level
- Length of time director has been in facility
- Rating of staff "buy-in"
- Staff turnover information

## *X. Record Keeping and Reporting Requirements*

The STARS TA organizations are required to keep detailed records about the STARS facilities that make application for technical assistance. Further, the STARS TA organizations are required to maintain files for each of the consultants that provide technical assistance to the STARS facilities. Some of these records will be maintained in hard copy files, while other information will be recorded directly into the STARS TA database (see the next section, *X. Database* for details on this system). In addition to this regular record keeping, the STARS TA organizations are required to submit periodic reports to KURC, as part of their contractual requirements.

### **X. 1 Hard Copy Files**

At a minimum the STARS TA organizations are required to maintain hard copy files for each child care facility that makes a request for STARS TA. The file for each facility should include, but may not be limited to:

- Request for STARS TA Form
- Facility Letter of Agreement
- Service Plan
- Completed evaluations

In addition to the files for child care facilities, the STARS TA organizations must keep files for each consultant, that includes, but may not be limited to:

- Consultant agreements to provide service
- Resumes
- TQAS letter of approval
- Invoices for work completed
- Completed evaluations

### **X. 2 Electronic Files**

The information that gets recorded in the database for STARS facilities and the STARS TA consultants is detailed in the STARS TA Database Manual.

### **X. 3 Recording Time Spent Per STARS Facility**

There are three categories of time that are “counted” for the technical assistance service provided to a facility that makes a request for STARS TA. These categories of time include:

- Time spent during the intake process, which involves the time spent in attempting to make contact with a facility for the initial call and the time spent on the initial visit.

- Time spent for all direct contact with a facility, after the intake process is complete. This includes phone calls, correspondence, and visits.
- Time spent for all indirect work for a facility, which is an essential part of the entire technical assistance provided to a facility (e.g., planning, prep, and follow-up time).

As a rule of thumb, 75% of the time should be in direct contact with the facility, with 25% of the technical assistance time for planning, prep, and follow-up to complete paperwork associated with the consultative relationship.

Time spent for travel to and from a facility is not to be counted as part of the technical assistance time allocated to a facility. However, STARS TA organizations may have their own policies relevant to their institutions regarding rates paid for consultant (technical assistance) time and rates paid for travel time.

#### **X. 4 Reporting Requirements**

The STARS TA organizations will have regularly scheduled meetings with each other, KURC, and DPW to examine the implementation process, make adjustments as necessary, and continue their sharing of best practices. As a result of these discussions, the STARS TA organizations will be required, at a minimum to submit semi-annual and annual reports to KURC describing what worked, what didn't work, and any suggestions they have for improvement. Additional reporting requirements may be developed as the system evolves.

## *XI. Database System*

The STARS TA system has a comprehensive database system that is web-based, allowing for continuous monitoring of the services delivered and evaluation of the effectiveness of STARS TA. The database system is accessible through the PA Keys website ([www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org))

**Appendix A:**  
*STARS TA Organization List and Map*

**Appendix B:**  
*FAQ About STARS TA*

**Appendix C:**  
*Request for STARS TA*

**Appendix D:**  
*STARS TA Incomplete Request Letter*

**Appendix E:**  
*STARS TA Initial Contact/Call Log*

**Appendix F:**  
*STARS TA Thirty-Day Letter*

**Appendix G:**  
*STARS TA Deferment Letter*

**Appendix H:**  
*STARS TA Withdrawal Letter*  
(To be completed)

**Appendix I:**  
*STARS TA Intake Log*

**Appendix J:**  
*STARS TA Facility Letter of Agreement*

**Appendix K:**  
*STARS TA Waiting List Letter*  
(To be completed)

**Appendix L:**  
*STARS TA Tool Kit*  
(To Be Completed)

**Appendix M:**  
*STARS TA Diagnostic Assessments*  
(To Be Completed)

**Appendix N:**  
*STARS TA Service Plan*

**Appendix O:**  
*STARS TA Inactive Letter*

**Appendix P:**  
*STARS TA Contact Log*

**Appendix Q:**  
*Consultant Feedback Form*

**Appendix R:**  
*STARS TA Feedback Form*

**Appendix S:**  
*Certificate of Completion*

# STARS TA Tool Kit

The following tools may be used to assess a facility's need for technical assistance. This annotated listing provides information about purpose, subscales, scoring, author(s), publisher, copyright/rights of use, ordering information, and cost.

## Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)

- Purpose:** To assess process quality in early childhood/preschool classrooms.
- Subscales:** Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, Parents and Staff
- Scoring:** 7 point rating scale where 1 is inadequate, 3 is minimal, 5 is good and 7 is excellent.
- Authors:** Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, Debby Cryer
- Publisher:** Teachers College Press
- Copyright and Rights of Use:** 1998 by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer. All rights reserved. You must purchase one copy of the scale. It may be used in multiple classrooms.
- Ordering Information:** Teachers College Press  
P.O. Box 20  
Williston, VT 05495-0020  
Web: [www.tcpres.com](http://www.tcpres.com)  
Phone: 800-575-6566
- Cost:** \$12.95 An updated and expanded version of the original score sheet is available free of charge at [www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers).

## Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)

- Purpose:** To assess process quality in infant/toddler classrooms.
- Subscales:** Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, Parents and Staff
- Scoring:** 7 point rating scale where 1 is inadequate, 3 is minimal, 5 is good and 7 is excellent.
- Authors:** Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, Richard M. Clifford
- Publisher:** Teachers College Press
- Copyright and Rights of Use:** 2003 by Thelma Harms, Deborah Reid Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. All rights reserved. You must purchase one copy of the scale. It may be used in multiple classrooms.
- Ordering Information:** Teachers College Press

P.O. Box 20  
Williston, VT 05495-0020  
Web: [www.tcpres.com](http://www.tcpres.com)  
Phone: 800-575-6566

**Cost:** \$12.95 An updated and expanded version of the original score sheet is available free of charge at [www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers).

### School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)

**Purpose:** To assess process quality in school-age programs.

**Subscales:** Space and Furnishings, Health and Safety, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, Staff Development, Special Needs Supplementary Items

**Scoring:** 7 point rating scale where 1 is inadequate, 3 is minimal, 5 is good and 7 is excellent.

**Authors:** Thelma Harms, Ellen Vineberg Jacobs, Donna Romano White

**Publisher:** Teachers College Press

**Copyright and Rights of Use:** 1996 by Thelma Harms, Ellen Vineberg Jacobs, and Donna Romano White. All rights reserved. You must purchase one copy of the scale. It may be used in multiple classrooms.

**Ordering Information:** Teachers College Press  
P.O. Box 20  
Williston, VT 05495-0020  
Web: [www.tcpres.com](http://www.tcpres.com)  
Phone: 800-575-6566

**Cost:** \$12.95 An updated version of the original score sheet is available free of charge at [www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers).

### Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS)

**Purpose:** To assess process quality in a home-based setting.

**Subscales:** Space and Furnishings for Care and Learning, Basic Care, Language and Reasoning, Learning Activities, Social Development, Adult Needs, Supplementary Items: Provisions for Exceptional Children

**Scoring:** 7 point rating scale where 1 is inadequate, 3 is minimal, 5 is good and 7 is excellent.

**Authors:** Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford

**Publisher:** Teachers College Press

**Copyright and Rights of Use:** 1989 by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford. All rights reserved. You must purchase one copy of the scale. It may be used in multiple classrooms.

**Ordering Information:** Teachers College Press  
P.O. Box 20  
Williston, VT 05495-0020  
Web: [www.tcpres.com](http://www.tcpres.com)  
Phone: 800-575-6566

**Cost:** \$12.95 An updated version of the original score sheet is available free of charge at [www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers).

### Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale

**Purpose:** To assess caregiver sensitivity.

**Subscales:** Positive, Punitive, Permissive, Detached, and Cognitive Stimulation.

**Scoring:** 4 point scale where 1 is not at all, 2 is somewhat, 3 is quite a bit and 4 is very much.

**Authors:** Jeff Arnett

**Publisher:** Originally published in 1989 in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 10, 541-552.

**Copyright and Rights of Use:** A user's guide and scale are available through PA Pathways.

**Ordering Information:** PA Pathways (Attn: Mary Frances Butcher)  
3823 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Erie, PA 16505  
Phone: 800-492-5107  
Email: [maryfrancesb@kurc.org](mailto:maryfrancesb@kurc.org)

**Cost:** No charge.

### Program Administration Scale (PAS)

**Purpose:** Measures the overall quality of administrative practices of early care and education programs.

**Subscales:** Human Resource Development, Personnel Cost and Allocation, Center Operations, Child Assessment, Fiscal Management, Program Planning and Evaluation, Family Partnerships, Marketing and Public Relations, Technology, and Staff Qualifications.

**Scoring:** 7 point rating scale where 1 is inadequate, 3 is minimal, 5 is good and 7 is excellent.

**Authors:** Teri N. Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom

**Publisher:** Teachers College Press

**Copyright and Rights of Use:** 2004 by Teri N. Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom. All rights reserved. You must purchase one copy of the scale per facility.

**Ordering Information:** Teachers College Press  
P.O. Box 20  
Williston, VT 05495-0020  
Web: [www.tcpres.com](http://www.tcpres.com)  
Phone: 800-575-6566

**Cost:** \$17.95

### Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES)

**Purpose:** Measures worker perceptions and attitudes about such things as co-worker relations, supervisor support, decision-making influence, goal consensus, and the physical setting. It is designed for centers that employ at least seven staff members.

**Subscales:** 10 dimensions of organizational climate are measured: Collegiality, Professional Growth, Supervisor Support, Clarity, Reward System, Decision Making, Goal Consensus, Task Orientation, Physical Setting, and Innovativeness.

**Scoring:** 10 point scale where 0 is the lowest possible score for each dimension and 10 is the highest.

**Authors:** Paula Jorde Bloom

**Publisher:** The Early Childhood Professional Development Project

**Copyright and Rights of Use:** 1996 by Paula Jorde Bloom. All rights reserved.

**Ordering Information:** The Center for Early Childhood Leadership  
National-Louis University  
6310 Capitol Drive  
Wheeling, Illinois 60090  
Web: [www.nl.edu/cecl](http://www.nl.edu/cecl)  
Phone: 800-443-5522 ext. 5551

<b>Cost:</b> Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (one for each employee)	\$8.00
Work Environment Profile (one for each site)	\$20.00
Sample Packet (includes sample survey and profile)	\$3.00
Resource Guide: Improving the Quality of Work Life	\$20.00

### Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES) – Short Form

**Purpose:** Provides a global assessment of organizational climate. May be administered to staff annually to take a quick pulse of organizational functioning.

**Subscales:** None.

**Scoring:** 5 point scale where 0 is never and 5 is always. Total scores range from 0– 100.

**Authors:** Paula Jorde Bloom

**Publisher:** The Early Childhood Professional Development Project

**Copyright and Rights of Use:** 1996 by Paula Jorde Bloom. All rights reserved.

**Ordering Information:** PA Pathways (Attn: Mary Frances Butcher)  
3823 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Erie, PA 16505  
Phone: 800-492-5107  
Email: [maryfrancesb@kurc.org](mailto:maryfrancesb@kurc.org)

**Cost:** Free of charge

### Quality of Inclusive Experiences Measure (QuIEM)

**Purpose:** To measure practices in child care programs that are thought to promote positive outcomes for young children with disabilities.

**Subscales:** Program Goals and Purposes, Staff Supports and Perceptions, Accessibility and Adequacy of the Physical Environment, Individualization of Goals, Planning and Implementation, Participation and Engagement, Adult-child Contacts and Relationships, and Child-child Contacts and Relationships

**Scoring:** 5 point rating scale where 1 is excellent, 2 is good, 3 is mediocre, 4 is poor, and 5 is very poor. Measurement procedures include review of written documents, interview, questionnaire and observation

**Authors:** Mark Wolery, Theresa Pauca, Margaret Brashers, S. Grant

**Publisher:** Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center

**Copyright and Rights of Use:** Originally published in 2000 by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center.

**Ordering Information:** PA Pathways (Attn: Mary Frances Butcher)  
3823 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Erie, PA 16505  
Phone: 800-492-5107  
Email: [maryfrancesb@kurc.org](mailto:maryfrancesb@kurc.org)

**Cost:** Free of charge

### User's Guide to the Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit, Research Edition

**Purpose:** Addresses the role of environmental factors in early literacy and language development by looking at the literacy and language practices and materials in early childhood classrooms.

**Subscales:** The User's Guide includes an introduction to ELLCO's practical applications, instructions for each of the three parts of the toolkit, narrative on successful classroom literacy practices and a technical assistance appendix.

**Scoring:** Not applicable.

**Authors:** Miriam W. Smith, Ed.D., & David K. Dickinson, Ed.D., with Angela Sangeorge & Louisa Anastasopoulos, M.P.P.

**Publisher:** Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

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**Ordering Information:** Customer Service Department  
Brookes Publishing Co.  
P.O. Box 10624  
Baltimore, MD 21285-0624  
Web: [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)  
Phone: 800-638-3775

<b>Cost:</b>	User's Guide	\$30.00
	Toolkit (package of 5)	\$20.00
	User's Guide & Toolkit	\$45.00

## Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit

**Purpose:** Addresses the role of environmental factors in early literacy and language development by looking at the literacy and language practices and materials in early childhood classrooms. The toolkit consists of three tools.

**Subscales/Scoring:** Literacy Environment Checklist – Availability, Content, and Diversity of Reading, Writing, and Listening Materials. The items are scored by answering yes/no questions or counting available materials.

The Classroom Observation and Teacher Interview – General classroom environment and Language, Literacy and Curriculum. The items are scored based on a 5-point scale where 5 is exemplary, 3 is basic and 1 is deficient.

The Literacy Activities Rating Scale – Book Reading and Writing. The items are scored by answering yes/no questions.

**Authors:** Miriam W. Smith, Ed.D., & David K. Dickinson, Ed.D., with Angela Sangeorge & Louisa Anastasopoulos, M.P.P.

**Publisher:** Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

**Copyright and Rights of Use:** 2002 by Education Development Center, Inc. All rights reserved. You must purchase one copy of the scale per facility.

**Ordering Information:**

Customer Service Department  
Brookes Publishing Co.  
P.O. Box 10624  
Baltimore, MD 21285-0624  
Web: [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)  
Phone: 800-638-3775

<b>Cost:</b>	User's Guide	\$30.00
	Toolkit (package of 5)	\$20.00
	User's Guide & Toolkit	\$45.00