



North Carolina's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant funded the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network to provide mini-grants and technical assistance for unlicensed public school and faith-based early learning programs to join North Carolina's Star Rated License system. Faith-based programs are not required to participate in the N.C. Star Rated License, but may choose to participate voluntarily. The grants assisted programs with meeting the standards for obtaining an initial temporary license and ultimately a four- or five-star license. In addition to grant funds, the public school, and faith-based early learning programs were able to access technical assistance from their local Child Care Resource and Referral agency, including implementation of quality improvement plans. This project was administered by the Southwestern Child Development Commission.

The Support to Enter the N.C. Star Rated License was successful in providing grants and technical assistance to public pre-kindergarten programs seeking licensure. Funds provided allowed public school systems to meet child care building, fire and sanitation standards, as well as materials and equipment for classrooms. The technical assistance provided by the CCR&R regional lead agency staff was a key component in the process toward licensure.

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Support to Enter the N.C. Star Rated License

PARTNERS



Public Pre-K Programs

- 232 unlicensed public pre-kindergarten programs were identified at the beginning of the grant cycle. Of these 232 programs, 180 now hold a four- or five- star license with N.C. Division of Child Development and Early Education. 52 of those original programs remain unlicensed. 49 percent of these 180 programs (88 programs) participated in the grant activity.
- 92 unlicensed public pre-kindergarten programs applied to participate and 88 programs were accepted to participate in the activity.

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- Of these 88 participating programs, 98 percent (86 out of 88) were successful in achieving a four- or five-star license.
- Of those 86 programs achieving a star rated license, 48 are five-star facilities and 38 are four-star facilities. 100 percent of these programs have either maintained or increased their licensure over the course of the grant cycle.
- A total of 2,568 children are served by these 86 participating programs.

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Additionally, the collaborative relationship between Southwestern Child Development Commission staff, the regional lead agency staff, and Division of Child Development and Early Education licensing consultants across the state enabled the process towards successful licensure for 86 public pre-kindergarten programs.

The participation of faith-based programs was lower than anticipated. Faith-based programs were surveyed to determine their interest in participating in this project, and if they were not interested, why they were not interested in pursuing licensure. Reasons included issues around corporal punishment, curriculum, lack of support from church staff and boards of directors, parent satisfaction with current quality of care, waiting lists of children wishing to attend their facility, and the level of work needed to achieve and maintain licensure with the state of North Carolina. Early care and education programs in faith based settings may want to improve quality but still may not want to participate in the N.C. Star Rated License due to requirements of paperwork and teacher training.

Programs licensed through this activity are required to maintain their licensure for a minimum of three years. It will be the responsibility of each participating program to ensure that licensure is maintained.

Faith-Based (GS-110) Operating Programs

- Fifteen faith-based GS-110 programs applied to participate.
- Of these 15 programs, five have achieved a star rated license. Two are five-star programs and three are four-star programs. All of these programs are in operation.
- A total of 426 children are served in these programs.
- One program closed during their participation in the grant activity.
- Six programs chose not to participate in the activity after they received their initial acceptance into the program.

For more information on child care licensing in N.C., go to <http://ncchildcare.nc.gov>. ■