

# LOOK for the STARS



QUALITY COUNTS  
FOR KIDS IN SARASOTA COUNTY

## MEANINGFUL ACHIEVEMENTS

The three year pilot engaged a large number of early care and education providers and resulted in significant improvements in quality at participating centers and homes, impacting almost 5,000 children in Sarasota County per year.

- ★ A high percentage of providers in Sarasota County recognized the importance of quality and made a commitment to the Look for the Stars program.
  - 77% of child care centers and 41% of family child care homes are currently participating. Additional sites have requested to be added to the program each year and requests are honored as resources allow.
- ★ Since the program started, an average of 4,900 children each year have been enrolled in Look for the Stars sites.
- ★ The quality of child care in Sarasota County is on the rise.
  - The number of sites at a three star level or above grew from 50% to 73% in three years. In the third year 103 child care providers across Sarasota County are a 3 star or above.
- ★ In year one, 42% of child care centers achieved a 3 star or higher. TODAY, 76% of the participating child care centers are at a 3 star level or higher.
- ★ In year one, only 9% of family child care homes achieved a 3 star or higher. TODAY, 64% of the participating family child care homes are at a 3 star level or higher.
- ★ In year one, only 39% of income eligible scholarship children were in 3, 4, or 5 star sites – the level determined to be consistently good quality. TODAY, 75% of scholarship children are in 3 star or higher sites – a remarkable improvement.
- ★ Among sites that participated all three years, significant quality gains have been made.
  - 46% of centers and 64% of family child care homes improved at least one star rating between year one and year three.
- ★ Sites that joined the program in year two also made significant improvements.
  - 60% of the centers and 100% of the family child care homes that began in year two improved by year three.
- ★ Child care providers have demonstrated their commitment to quality care through record attendance at this year's trainings.
  - 3,842 teachers and directors attended 182 trainings in the third year of the program
- ★ Although only a pilot, parents are using the information, with over 5,600 hits to the Look for the Stars Web site between 2009 and 2010.

**These remarkable improvements in the quality of early care and education are having meaningful, positive impacts on the lives of young children in Sarasota County!**

[www.lookforthestars.org](http://www.lookforthestars.org)

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



# PROVIDERS SPEAK OUT

“Our Coalition mentor was wonderful! She went above & beyond to help us understand and execute what we learned, Thanks!”

“Those assessors last year must have wondered what in the world I was thinking! Now I know what we’re supposed to be doing and we have really made changes that have made our program so much better.”

“It took a long time to convince me to change the way we had been doing things - I was sure my way was right. But after hearing the same message for more than 2 years from the mentors and taking the trainings with my teachers I finally got on board and made changes. My program is so much better now than it was before, and we have gone from a 2 star to 4 star site.”

“After taking the Creative Curriculum training I realized I really hadn’t understood what I was doing with babies and toddlers. That training taught me how to be a teacher.”



“Having the wall moved and my room painted made such a difference for me as a teacher and for the children. Our mentor made the arrangements with the Senior Friendship Volunteer to have this done, and we really appreciate all the work.”

“I thought I didn’t need any help, I thought my program was just fine. But after the training and making the changes with the help of my mentor I have to say it is much better. The changes really made a difference.”

“We appreciate all the support classes. Our ELC mentors are special supports to the Stars community! Thank you!”

“We so much appreciate the retention bonus checks. It meant so much to know that our commitment and loyalty were recognized. We also want to thank you for your ongoing patience and support throughout the year.”

“The training at the Directors Connection has helped me improve my staff meetings and trainings. I include more meaningful information and more engaging ways to present information.”



## 2010 COMMUNITY AND STATE AWARDS FOR LOOK FOR THE STARS

### Winner Of WEDU’s Be More...Knowledgeable Award

An award which recognizes the outreach tools an organization has employed to educate and inform the community.

### Winner of the Florida Public Relations Association’s Golden Image Award

for Best Internal Public Relations Program.

- ★ Not only do quality early learning experiences positively impact a child’s success, but studies additionally show that quality early education is also critical for economic success.
- ★ The Economic Policy Institute reports that education programs for young children ultimately provide many financial benefits to local governments, taxpayers and society in general and contribute directly to higher employment and wages, better health, less crime, less poverty, and greater government resources.
- ★ A Pew Center report on the Partnership for America’s Economic Success definitely states that Investment in early childhood education pays for itself in the long run with strong economic development and substantial long-term benefits.