



WILDER RESEARCH, CHILD TRENDS, SRI INTERNATIONAL,
AND CENTER FOR EARLY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT,
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA.

Evaluation of Parent Aware: Minnesota's Pilot Quality Rating System

Key Findings from the Year 2 Evaluation Report



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Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division Briefing
February 11, 2010

Agenda

- Overview of Parent Aware
- Overview of evaluation questions
- Presentation of findings in five key areas
- Discussion of next steps
- Questions

Parent Aware Pilot

- 4 year pilot program operating from July, 2007 through June 2011
- Pilot areas include:
 - City of Saint Paul
 - City of Minneapolis
 - Wayzata School District
 - Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties
 - 7 county metropolitan area (for accredited programs only)

Overview of Parent Aware

- Open to licensed child care centers, licensed family child care, Head Start and School Readiness programs
- Two rating options
 - Full rating 1 to 4 star rating
 - Automatic 4-star rating for accredited programs, Head Start and School Readiness programs



Parent Aware Full Ratings

- Points are earned in four quality categories
 - Family Partnerships
 - Teaching Materials and Strategies
 - Tracking Learning
 - Teacher Training and Education
- Stars are awarded based on the number of points earned in each area
- Programs must also submit a health and safety checklist, and to receive more than 1 star, be in compliance with licensing

Find
ProgramsFinancial
AssistanceParent Aware
Star RatingsBlue Earth &
Nicollet County

Minneapolis

Saint
PaulWayzata School
District

PARENT INFORMATION

PILOT AREA PROGRAMS



Parent
Aware

A Rating Tool for Selecting High Quality
Child Care and Early Education


 Providers / Early Educators

[<back to search results](#)

All Of Our Children Family Child Care

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[map](#)

All of Our Children Day Care's view is that each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development. We believe that children need to foster creativity and expand on their self-expression, ideas and feelings. We embrace the belief that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children and we are here to enhance that learning. [learn more](#)

Quality Rating:  (out of a possible 4 stars)

Rating Detail by Category

[About the Ratings](#)

Family Partnerships
Teaching Materials
Tracking Learning
Teacher Training



Health and Safety

[Health and Safety Information on this Program](#)

For more information about this program access the [child care search tool](#) or call your local Child Care Resource

Program Information from the Parent Aware website

Name and Map



Program Philosophy



Overall Rating



Details by Rating Category



What is unique about Parent Aware compared to other QRIS?

- Focus on school readiness
- Focus on parents
- Uses expert panel review of curriculum and assessment tools
- Focus on cultural sensitivity and diversity

Evaluation of Parent Aware

- Process evaluation focuses on:
 - Recruitment and enrollment
 - General and specific implementation issues
 - Validation of the rating tool
- Outcomes evaluation focuses on:
 - Quality improvement
 - Parents' perceptions
 - Linkage of ratings and children's school readiness

Evaluation of Parent Aware

- The Evaluation uses different types of data from multiple sources.
- Three reports:
 - Year One Evaluation Report (January, 2009)
 - Year Two Evaluation Report (February, 2010)
 - Final Report (anticipated Late Fall, 2010)

Findings from the Year 2 Report

1. Recruitment and enrollment
2. Characteristics of Parent Aware-rated programs
3. Parents in Parent Aware-rated programs
4. Impact of Parent Aware on the early childhood system and the quality of programs
5. Challenges and looking toward statewide implementation

Recruitment and enrollment

- What is the number and pattern of enrolled programs?
- What proportion of eligible programs have a current Parent Aware rating?
- Overall, how is recruitment going?

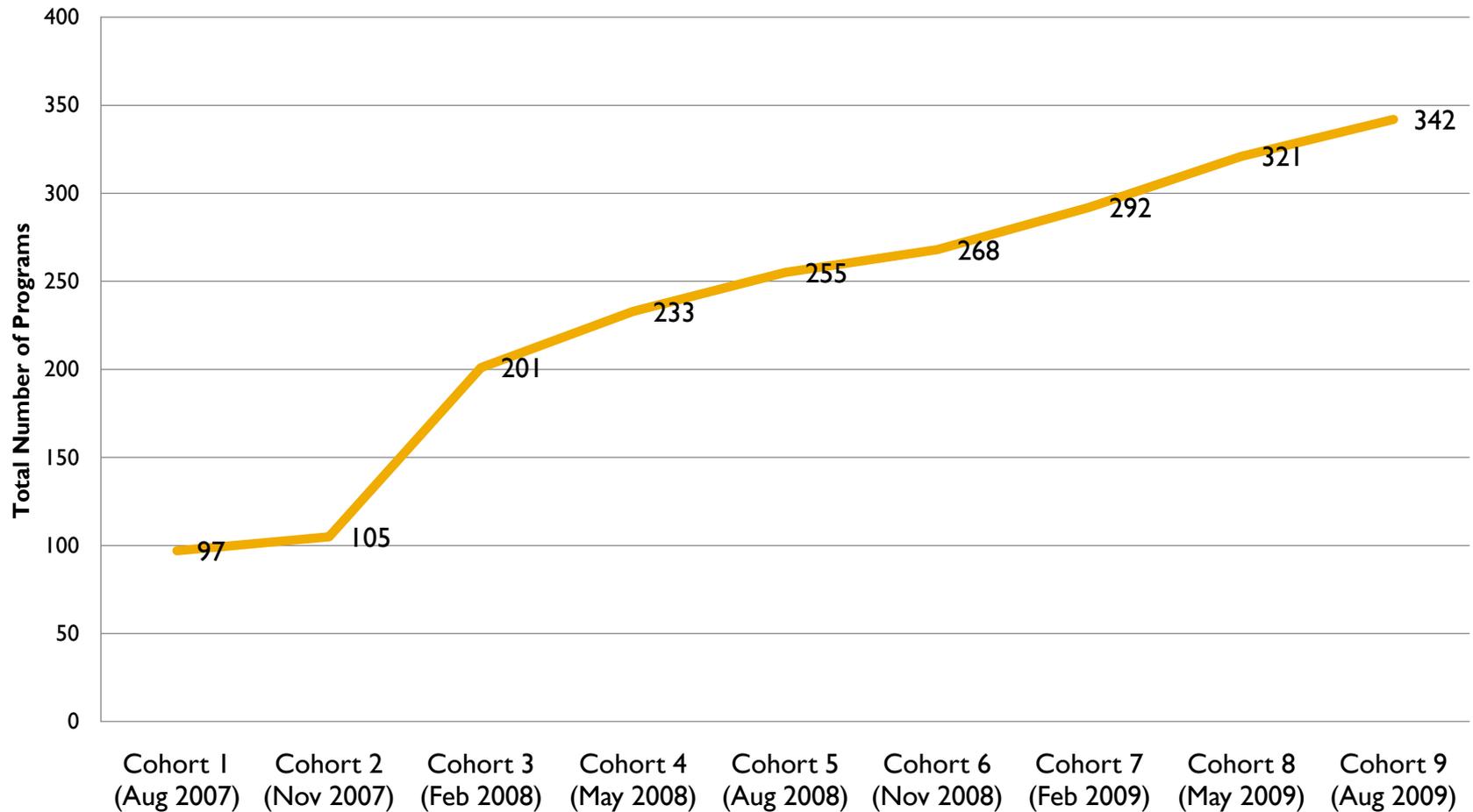
Number and pattern of enrolled programs

- There is steady enrollment in Parent Aware
- As of August 2009:
 - 342 total programs enrolled*
 - 152 accredited programs
 - 43 child care centers
 - 66 family child care programs
 - 23 Head Start
 - 49 School Readiness programs
 - 9 provisional ratings

*Not all programs have received ratings

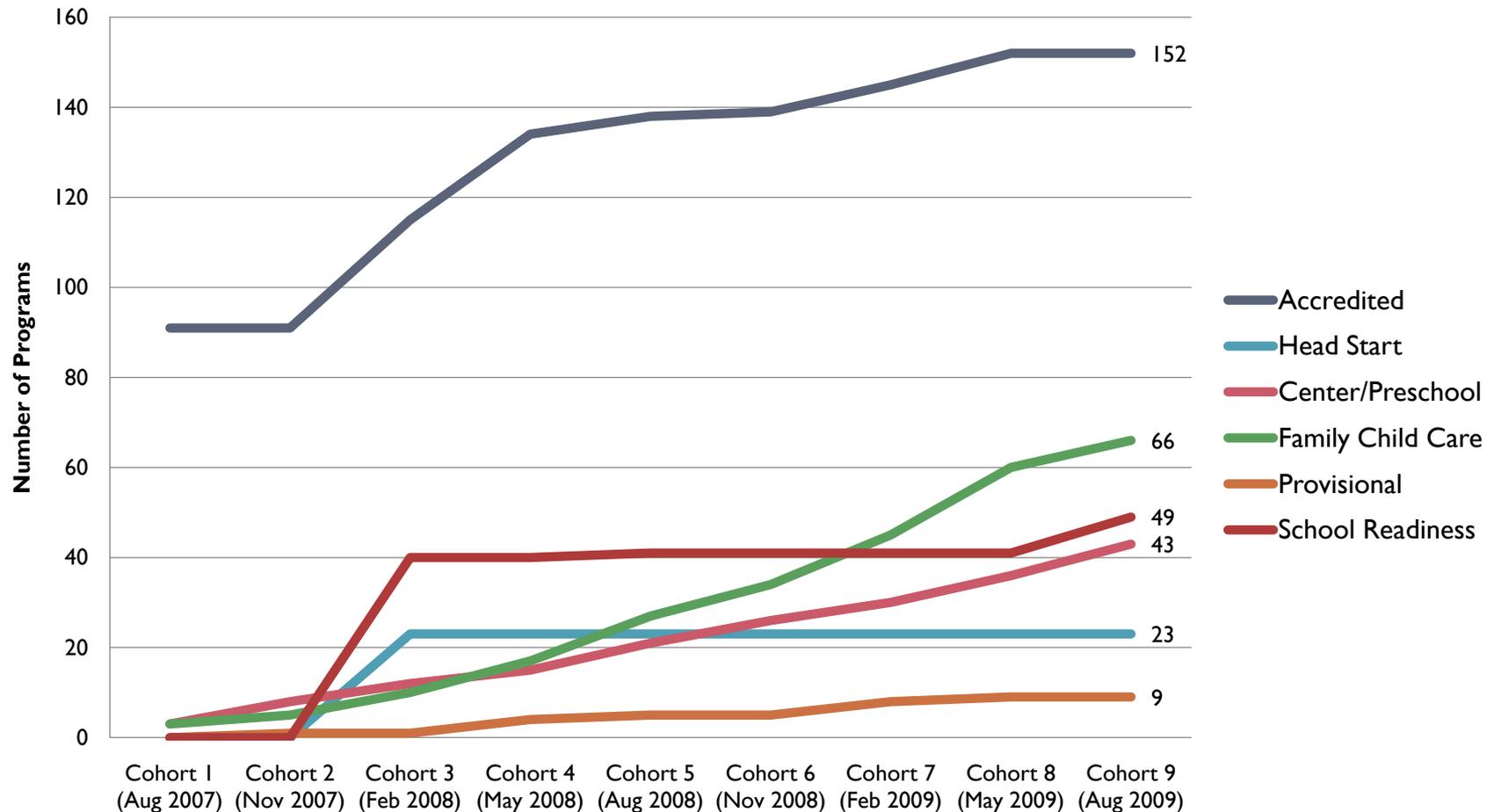
Total Enrollment in Parent Aware

as of Aug. 2009



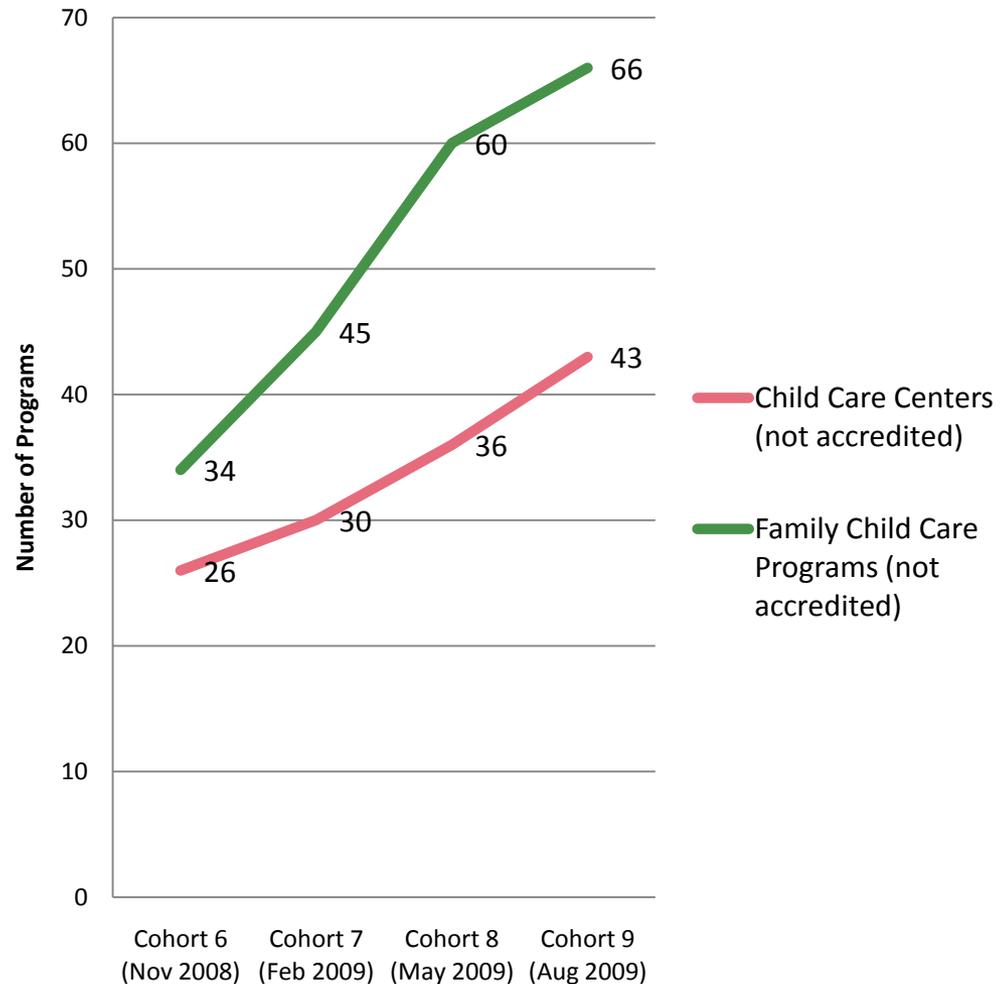
Enrollment in Parent Aware by Program Type

as of Aug. 2009



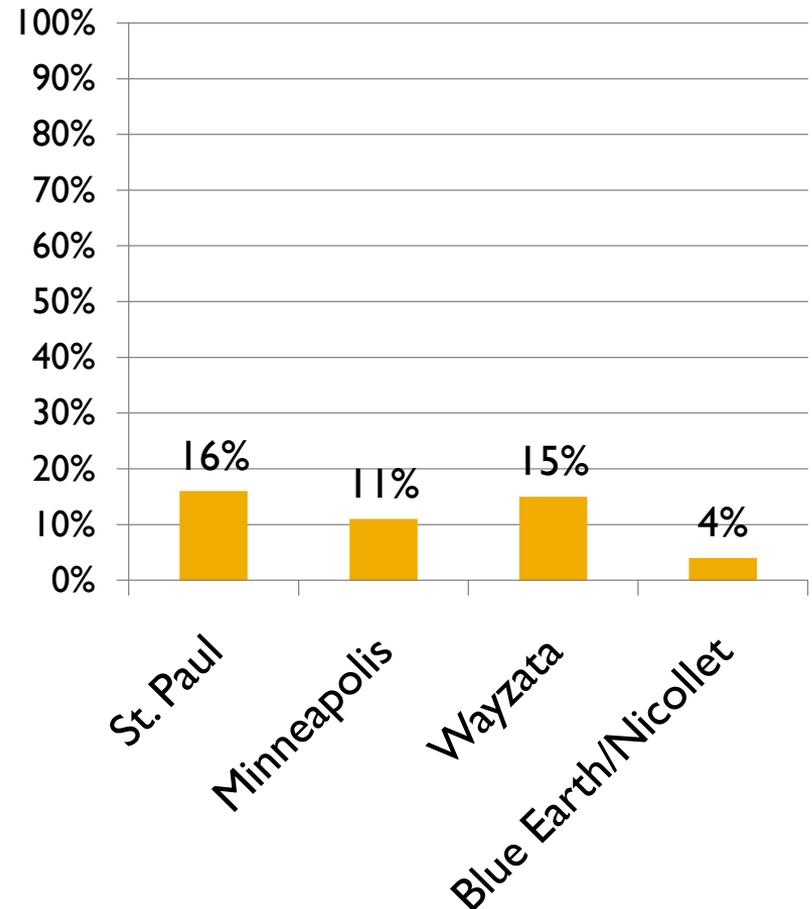
Pattern of Enrollment as of Aug. 2009

- Enrollment of family child care programs is increasing at a higher rate than other types of programs



Proportion of Eligible Programs with a Parent Aware Rating as of Dec. 2009

- Across the four pilot areas, approximately 11% of eligible programs have a Parent Aware rating.
- 82% of accredited programs in the 7-county metropolitan area and Blue Earth/Nicollet have a Parent Aware rating



Note: All School Readiness programs in the pilot areas have Parent Aware ratings.

How is recruitment going?

- Stakeholders perceive that the programs that could be easily recruited have now enrolled in Parent Aware.
 - Automatic rating processes were successful tools to build a base of programs in Parent Aware
- Parent-driven financial incentives for choosing a Parent Aware program have ended (the Allowances) or will end next year (Scholarships)
 - Will pose challenges to recruitment
- A workgroup is addressing recruitment issues related to culturally specific providers/programs
- Programs may need specific help to address Parent Aware indicators. Offering this help may improve recruitment

Parent Aware Recruitment Video

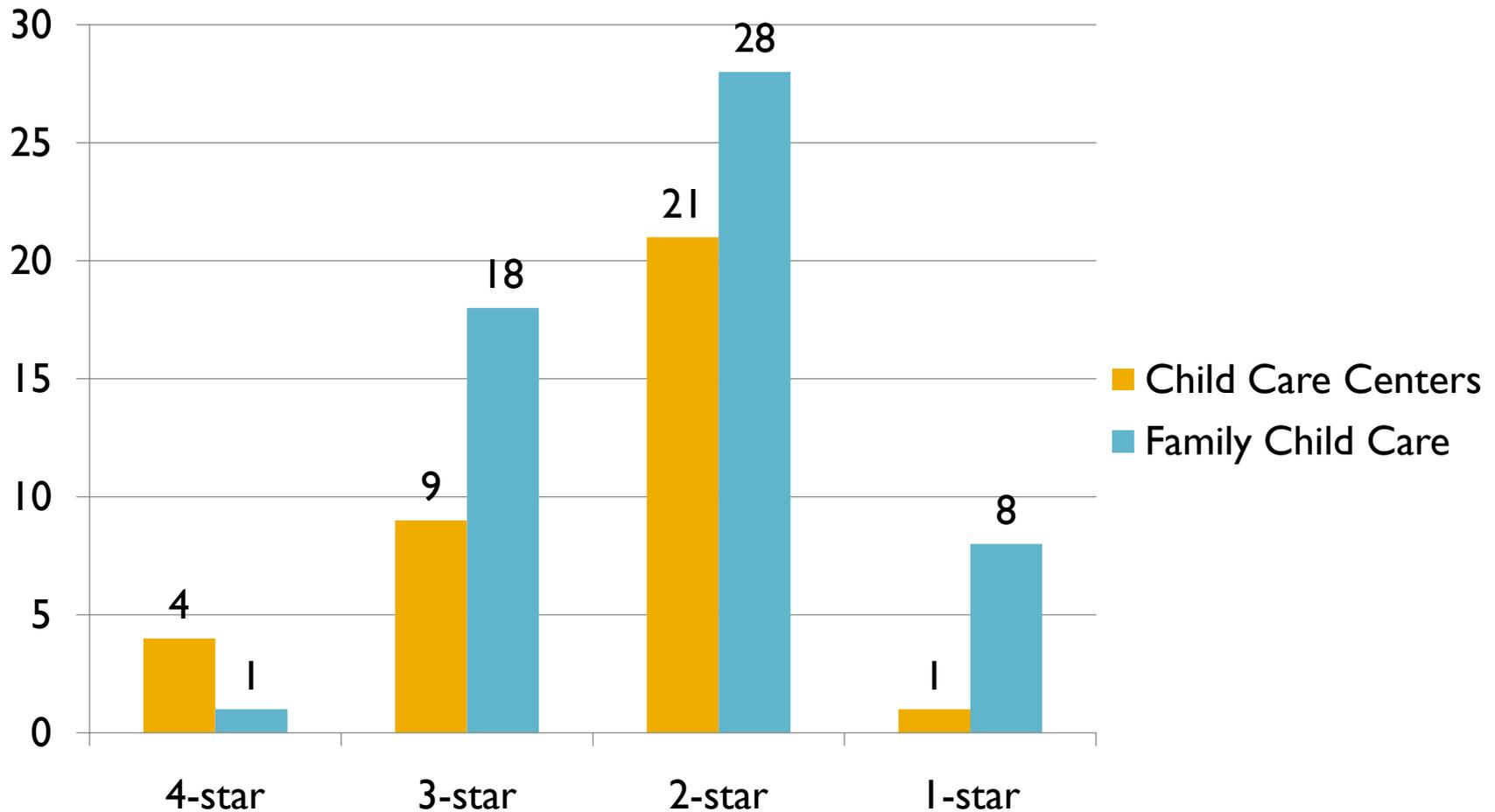
Characteristics of Parent Aware-Rated Programs

- What are the star ratings of programs in Parent Aware?
- How are programs scoring on the quality categories in Parent Aware?
- Are programs that have been “re-rated” showing improved quality?
- How many children are served by Parent Aware-rated programs?
- What proportion of Parent Aware-rated programs care for children receiving CCAP?
- How do providers in Parent Aware-rated programs feel about Parent Aware?

Star Ratings

- Total number of currently rated programs
 - 316
- 234 have automatic 4-star ratings
 - 162 accredited
 - 23 Head Start
 - 49 School Readiness

Initial Ratings for 90 Programs that Went Through the Full Rating Process



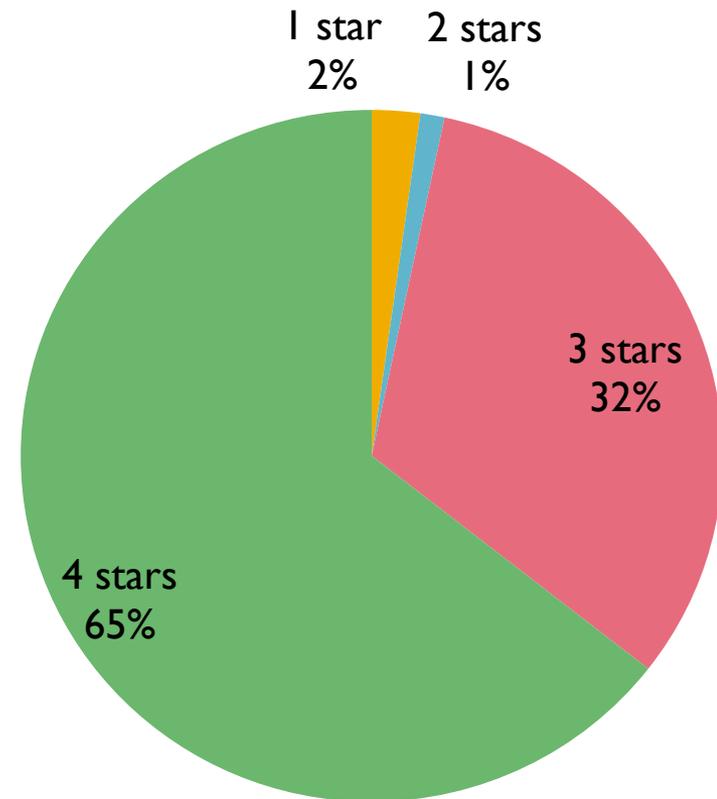
Last updated February 10, 2010

Program Scores on the Parent Aware Quality Categories

- Each category is worth 10 points
- Categories are:
 - Family Partnerships
 - Teaching Materials and Strategies
 - Tracking Learning
 - Teacher Training and Education

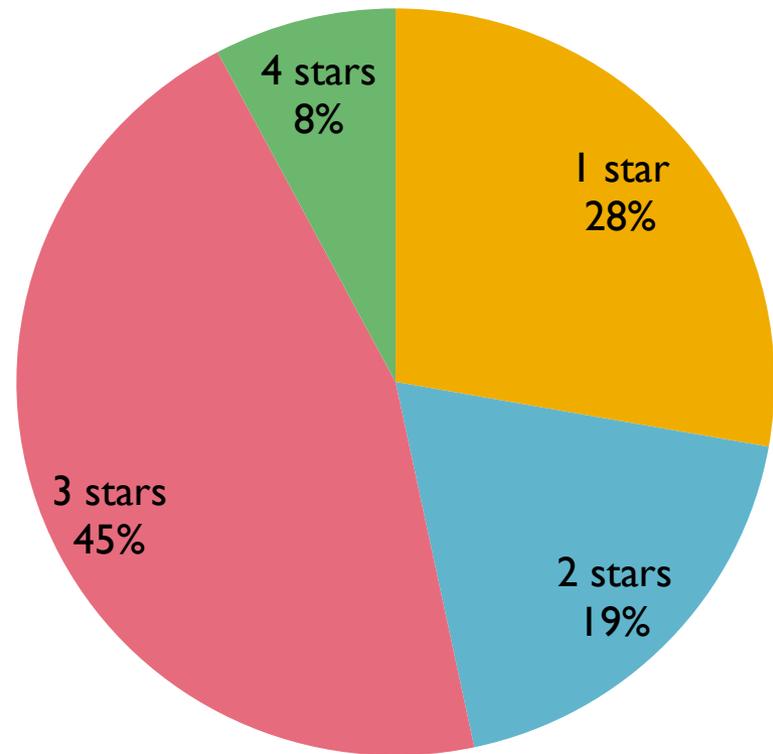
Scoring on Family Partnerships

- Programs score very well on this category (8.1 out of 10 on average) in initial ratings.
- Over a third of the programs (38%) scored 10 points in this category in their initial rating.



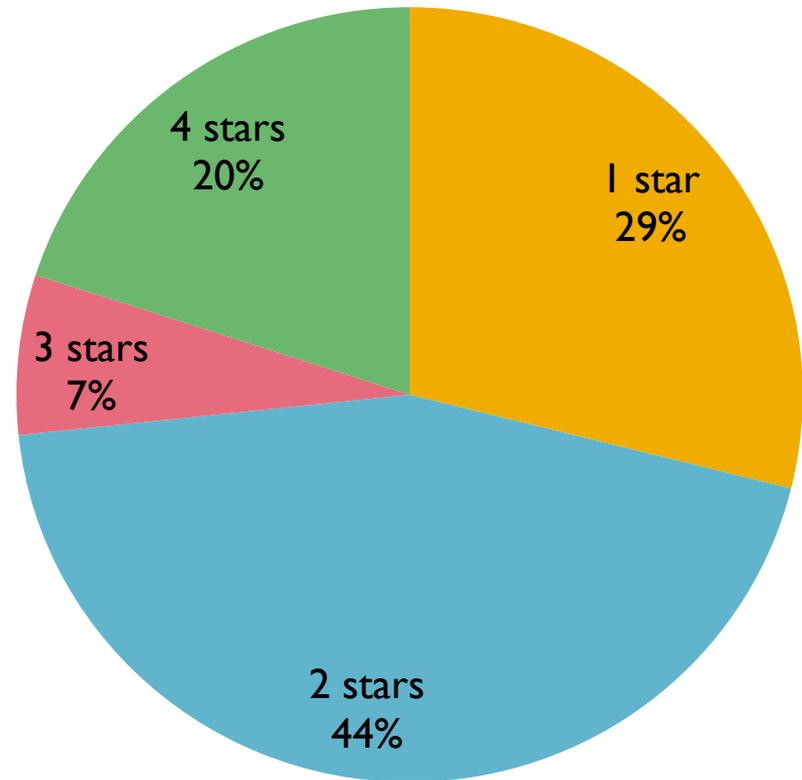
Scoring on Teaching Materials and Strategies

- Initial rating scores were lower on average in this category (4.2 out of 10 points)



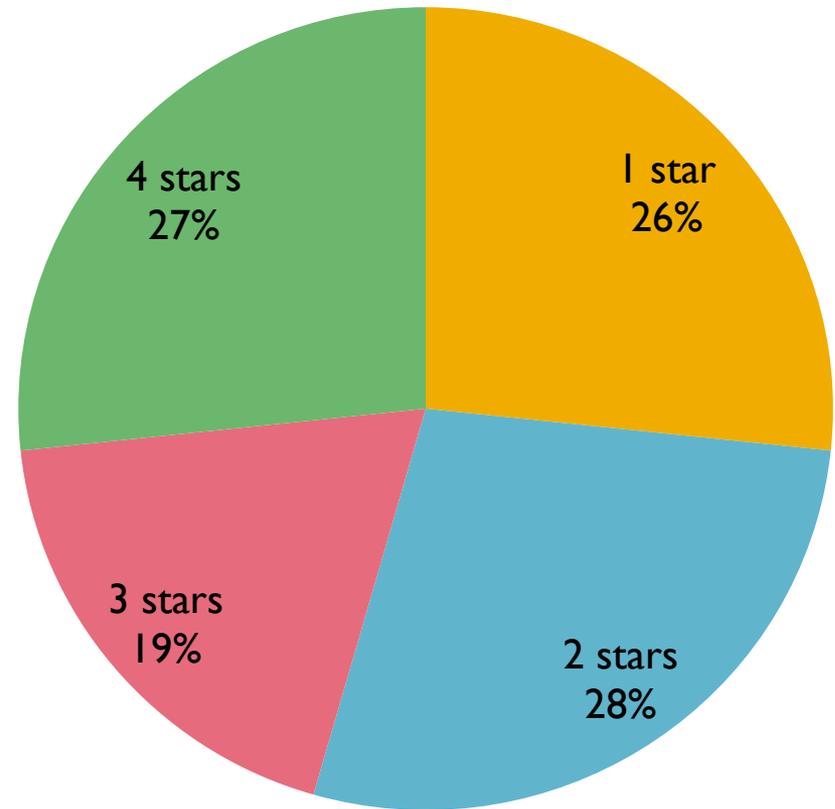
Scoring on Tracking Learning

- Initial rating scores were lower on average in this category as well.
- On average, programs scored 4.2 out of 10 points.



Scoring on Teacher Training and Education

- Scoring on this category was nearly equally distributed across the star levels
- Programs scored 5.0 out of 10 points on average.



Summary of Scoring Information

- Programs score higher, on average, in the Family Partnerships category
- Programs score lower, on average, in the Tracking Learning Category
- About a third of programs (31%) have at least one category with a 4-star rating and one category with a 1-star rating
- Comparison between survey data and ratings indicate that programs report some practices that they do not receive credit for in Parent Aware. **This indicates that Parent Aware is using rigorous methods to assess quality.**

Re-rated Programs

- 32 programs have been re-rated
- For the 12 re-rated centers:
 - 2 programs maintained their star rating
 - 5 programs went up one star (4 from 2- to 3-stars, 1 from 3-to 4-stars)
 - 5 programs went up two stars (all from 2- to 4-stars)
- For the 20 re-rated family child care programs
 - 1 program went down one star (from 3- to 2-stars)
 - 1 maintained their 2-star rating
 - 4 programs went up one star (2 from 2- to 3-stars and 2 from 3- to 4-stars)
 - 14 programs went up two stars (5 from 1- to 3-stars and 9 from 2- to 4-stars)

Re-rated programs

- Overall, 83% of child care centers and 90% of family child care programs *increased* their star rating
- 53% of all re-rated programs moved up to a 4-star rating

How many children are in Parent Aware-rated programs?

- Enrollment data indicate that Parent Aware rated programs serve over 19,590 children
 - 16% school-age
 - 55% preschool age
 - 18% toddlers
 - 11% infants

Do Parent Aware-rated programs serve children receiving CCAP?

- Yes, the majority of rated programs (over 85%) are currently caring for children who receive CCAP.
- Another 12% are willing to care for children who receive CCAP.

Perceptions of Providers in Parent Aware-Rated Programs

- Overall impression of Parent Aware
 - Directors in center-based – over 90% of survey respondents have a positive impression
 - Family child care providers – about 50% report positive impressions
- The majority of respondents say that Parent Aware has been beneficial for their program
 - Programs appreciate the feedback, assistance and resources
 - *“It has put my childcare on a totally different level. The way I feel about my program, the way the children are learning... it helped me figure out where I needed to improve. Even the way I set my room up was based on what I learned. Using Creative Curriculum has really been great- and the kids in my program have really benefitted from that. I would never been able to afford that or afford the training & Parent Aware made that possible.”* Family child care provider

Perceptions of Providers in Parent Aware-Rated Programs

- Respondents had positive impressions of the Resource Specialists
 - *“She was always open to questions and got right back to me with answers. She was very knowledgeable and helpful. I felt she went above and beyond to help my specific situation.”* Center director
- Respondents had mixed impressions about the observation conducted in their program
 - *“Absolutely loved them. OK – I didn’t actually love having them here and maybe I was a little nervous. But, I loved the feedback and seeing where I was doing what needs to be done. I want to be a fabulous provider and so to read something that I thought I was really good at ...but it needed improvement ... that made me want to do even better. I had no problem at all being critiqued.”* Family child care provider
- Some concerns about the fairness of the rating process
 - *I do not believe the rating is reflective of the quality program that I offer for families and children.”*

Perceptions of Providers in Parent Aware-Rated Programs

- All survey respondents had suggestions for improving Parent Aware
 - Increase flexibility of Parent Aware to accommodate different program philosophies, cultures, and family child care
 - *Would like “more tolerance in the rating system... [the standards] are too black and white and in child care, there are many grey areas”* Center director
 - Provide more time to complete the requirements
 - Provide more supports

Parents in Parent Aware-rated Programs

- Have parents heard about Parent Aware?
- How do parents hear about the program they are using?
- What do parents want from their early care and education program?

Have Parents Heard About Parent Aware?

- Among a sample of 153 parents in Parent Aware-rated programs, 20% had heard of Parent Aware
- Survey was conducted in the Fall of 2008. New parent survey data from the Fall of 2009 will demonstrate if awareness has increased.

Parents and Their Early Care and Education Program

- Parents hear about their current program primarily through word-of-mouth.
- The main reason parents report for choosing their program is nearly equally split between perceptions of high quality OR convenience/affordability.

Parents Care About...

- Parents rate social interaction as slightly more important than academic aspects of their program, although both are perceived as important.
- Parents want their program to promote positive child outcomes including social development/interactions with others, literacy outcomes, readiness for school, math skills and independence.
- Parents also value safety, structure and provisions for learning experiences. They want teachers/caregivers to provide individual attention and warmth/nurturance. They want teachers to address differences and disabilities.

Impact of Parent Aware

- What do stakeholders say is the most important impact of Parent Aware to date?
- How is Parent Aware changing discussions about early care and education?
- What legislation and legislative activities related to Parent Aware have happened in the last 18 months?

What do stakeholders say is the most important impact of Parent Aware?

- Parent Aware has brought the issue of quality to the forefront for programs, parents, and for the early childhood community more broadly.
- Parent Aware has “sparked conversation” and “gotten people talking about quality” and “what the next stage is for early education”.

Parent Aware is changing the focal point of discussions about early care and education

- Parent Aware provides common standards and a shared language for quality
 - Provides an infrastructure for quality
- Parent Aware has raised awareness of quality among programs and the community
 - *“It’s huge to get people to recognize what the core components are of quality and why they need these to provide excellent care”*
- Parent Aware has the attention of legislators
 - *“[Legislative support] sends a message to providers that this is important, this is the direction we are moving”*

Legislation and legislative activities related to Parent Aware

- Extension of the Parent Aware pilot
- Supports to prepare for a voluntary, statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Continuation of the School Readiness Connections (SRC) pilot and requirement for SRC providers to enroll in Parent Aware
- Direction for DHS and MDE to create a framework for a quality rating and improvement system.

Legislation and legislative activities related to Parent Aware cont.

- Examination and analysis of a quality rating and improvement system model by the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and subcommittees
- Commissioning of report on scaling options presented by Anne Mitchell and Louise Stoney

Challenges and Looking Toward Statewide Implementation

- What are the key challenges for Parent Aware in the final 18 months of the pilot?
- What do stakeholders emphasize when looking ahead to possible statewide implementation?

Key Challenges

- Managing changes in procedures and protocols
 - *“It seems like the ground is always shifting”*
 - *“inconsistent messages amongst the different players”*
- Making Parent Aware more responsive to cultural communities
- Getting “buy in” from all programs
- Having consistent and adequate resources to support quality improvement

Statewide Implementation: Recommendations from Stakeholders

- Assess and improve the rating process based on evaluation findings
 - Focus in particular on the validity of the automatic rating process
- Improve capacity to provide quality improvement resources such as curriculum training and consultation
- Continue to maintain a strong focus on parents

Statewide Implementation cont.

- Increase the incentives for programs to participate
- Assess the feasibility of continuing program observations and curriculum/assessment reviews
- Consider strategies for tailoring Parent Aware to different geographic areas and different types of programs
- Achieve consistency and stability in the program

Next Steps for the Evaluation

- Report will be released by the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation in February
- Research team will collect data from children this spring
- Analyses will be conducted this summer:
 - In-depth examination of the quality indicators
 - Analysis of the data collected from children, families and programs
- Final report expected in late Fall

Questions?

Please feel free to email Kathryn Tout
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