Parent Aware by the numbers
February 2017

Overview of Parent Aware
Parent Aware is Minnesota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System that offers tools and resources to help families find quality child care and early education, help programs improve their practices, and help children benefit from care and education that will prepare them for school and life. Funding from Minnesota’s federal Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge Grant and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) made it possible for Minnesota to expand Parent Aware incrementally. Since January 2015, Parent Aware became available to all program types statewide.

Growth of Parent Aware rated programs over time
Some types of child care and early education programs have been able to participate in Parent Aware statewide since 2012: Public School Pre-Kindergarten, Head Start/Early Head Start and accredited child care programs. The majority of these programs hold a Parent Aware Rating. Many non-accredited child care programs were located in counties not able to participate in Parent Aware until January 2015. The percent of these programs with a Parent Aware Rating is steadily increasing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program type</th>
<th>Number of rated sites as of 12/31/2012</th>
<th>Number of rated sites as of 12/31/2013</th>
<th>Number of rated sites as of 12/31/2014</th>
<th>Number of rated sites as of 12/31/2015</th>
<th>Number of rated sites as of 12/31/16</th>
<th>Percent rated (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public School Pre-Kindergarten¹ (n=754)</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>725²</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start/Early Head Start³ (n=286)</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>264⁴</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited child care centers⁵ (n=511)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited family child care⁶ (n=34)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-accredited child care centers⁶ (n=1,198)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-accredited family child care⁶ (n=8,791)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N=11,798)</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>1322</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>2441</td>
<td>2635</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Estimate of Public School Pre-Kindergarten sites is from Minnesota Department of Education on Jan. 20, 2017.
² These 724 Public School Pre-Kindergarten sites meeting School Readiness standards represent 318 school districts (including 15 charter schools). Of the 724 rated sites, 21 are licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services as child care centers.
³ The number of Head Start/Early Head Start sites is from Minnesota Department of Education on Jan. 20, 2017.
⁴ These 264 Head Start/Early Head Start sites represent 30 Head Start grantees. Of the 264 rated sites, 166 are licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services as child care centers, 17 are licensed by the department as family child care providers, and nine are licensed by a tribe.
⁵ The number of accredited child care programs is from NACCRAAware, data system of Child Care Aware of America on Jan. 10, 2017.
⁶ The number of non-accredited child care programs is from Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing Look-up on Jan. 10, 2017 minus the number of accredited programs.
Future growth projections

As of Jan. 20, 2017, an additional 486 child care programs signed an agreement to be rated by Dec. 31, 2017. At current funding levels, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (department) staff expect the majority of programs to continue to hold a Parent Aware Rating, while increasing the number of newly rated child care programs by about 300 a year. As participation in Parent Aware is voluntary, department staff do not expect to achieve 100 percent participation.

Rated programs by Star-Levels and pathway

Programs can be rated via two pathways: Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) for Public School Pre-Kindergarten, Head Start/Early Head Start and accredited child care; and the full rating process for non-accredited child care programs. Quality of Parent Aware Rated programs is indicated by star levels: One-Star Rating (lowest) to Four-Star Rating (highest). All APR-rated programs receive a Four-Star Rating. Currently, the most common rating for a non-accredited child care program is a Two-Star Rating (31 percent), with a Four-Star Rating (25 percent) the second most common.

Current Rated Programs include:

- 51 percent rated via APR
- 64 percent rated at a Four-Star Rating level.

Graph 1 Parent Aware Star-Level Ratings as of Dec. 31, 2016

Increasing Star-Level

As of Dec. 31, 2016, 208 child care programs with a prior rating of One-, Two-, or Three-Star received a new rating. Programs are largely able to improve ratings over time, as follows:

- 74 percent increased their rating
- 23 percent maintained their rating.

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7 Parent Aware Ratings are active for two years. At the end of this period, programs need to reapply for a new rating, submitting required information to ensure ongoing quality.
Children in care

High needs children served in highly Rated Programs

Only programs with a Three- or Four-Star Rating are eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program’s maximum rate differential. As of July 1, 2016, only Three- or Four-Star Rated programs are eligible to serve children receiving an Early Learning Scholarship.

Chart 1 High needs children in Three- or Four-Star Rated Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program type</th>
<th>Number of children with high needs served</th>
<th>Number of children with high needs served in Three- or Four-Star Rated Programs</th>
<th>Percent of children with high needs served in Three- or Four-Star Rated Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public School Pre-Kindergarten(^8)</td>
<td>29,642</td>
<td>28,875</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Head Start and Head Start(^8)</td>
<td>12,435</td>
<td>11,873</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs receiving Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) funds(^9)</td>
<td>16,233</td>
<td>7,231</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children receiving non-parental care in Rated Programs

The department estimates that 318,164\(^10\) children ages birth to 5 are regularly cared for in some form of non-parental care. Currently, 28 percent of those children are cared for in Parent Aware Rated Programs. This is likely an underestimate of children served since the number served is unknown for some Rated Programs.

Graph 2 Percent of children receiving care in Rated Programs

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\(^8\) The count of children with high needs served by Public School Pre-Kindergarten meeting School Readiness Standards and Head Start/Early Head Start comes from the Minnesota Department of Education, 2016 Annual Race to the Top Data, Jan.19, 2017.

\(^9\) The count of children receiving funding from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) were pulled from Minnesota’s administrative data system (MEC) for children receiving services in October 2016. Reporting October service data allows most provider bills to be submitted and paid by the time the counts are pulled for February reporting. The count represents the number of children age birth-5 and not yet in Kindergarten, on whose behalf funds were paid to licensed child care programs rated in the top tiers of Parent Aware as of Dec. 31, 2016.

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