

Quality Child Care Matters—Be A Part of the Solution

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) receives calls daily from parents and/or employers seeking information about quality child care programs. At CCR&R, we provide quality indicator education and resources; but, as of this writing South Carolina (SC) lacks a clear quality evaluation system beyond that of the current three-tiered system:

- Level 1/Regulated, Licensed or ABC (Advocates for Better Care)
- Level 2/ABC Enhanced
- Level 3/National Accreditation (NAEYC)

The reality is that there is a huge difference between the requirements of ABC and ABC Enhanced child care programs versus NAEYC accredited programs. Furthermore, ABC Enhanced providers only need to meet 80% of State standards to qualify. This contributes to the lack of consistency in child care quality across the state.

As a state, it is our belief that we are all striving to achieve the same goal, which is to increase the “availability of affordable, quality child care.” To achieve this goal, it is critical that parents, child care providers, business leaders, and early childhood education professionals work together. CCR&R of Upstate SC asks you to honestly examine the positive impact that the proposed voluntary *Quality Rating System: Palmetto STARS** would have on the overall child care and early education system.

Palmetto STARS would be purely voluntary for child care providers. It would look similar to other industry “star guides” that differentiate levels of quality. A *Quality Rating System* would enable consumers to better understand the key components of quality, and subsequently be better prepared to select a program that best meets their child’s learning needs.

The time has come for South Carolina to look to our youth as we prepare and strive to build the workforce of tomorrow. We must invest in our youngest citizens by implementing a *voluntary quality rating system*.

As a parent, your involvement will help to improve the child care system for all. Parents are urged to speak with elected officials about the proposed voluntary *Quality Rating System*. It is time for you to demand quality early education and let your voice be heard!

—United Way *Success By 6*[®]

To learn more about Palmetto Stars or quality rating systems call: 864-467-4800, 877-467-4800 or go to one of the following websites on quality child care:

www.nccic.com

www.parentsaction.org

www.childcareaware.org

www.naeyc.org

www.nafcc.org

www.naccrra.org

http://www.buildinitiative.org/docs/activities/Impact-on-Quality_August.doc

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/%7Encedl/PDFs/RegBrief.pdf>

*If implemented *Palmetto STARS* may not be the actual name, however, at the time of this printing this is the title that has been under discussion for a child care Quality Rating System (QRS).

