# Tennessee Report Card & Star Quality Program ← Year 10 Annual Report

June 2012

PREPARED FOR THE

Tennessee Department of Human Services



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## Tennessee Department of Human Services

BY

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Project # 12101

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#### Introduction

reserved.

The Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program (often referred to as the "STARS" program) was implemented in October 2001. There are two aspects of the Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program: the mandatory Report Card Program and the voluntary Star Quality Program. Since both programs employ the same evaluation criteria, this study will cover only the results of the more inclusive Report Card Program. The report examines scores on all components of the report card evaluation and provides further details about the program assessment component scores.

This report uses the score interpretation ("poor," "fair," and "good") recommended by the authors of the assessment instruments, the Environment Rating Scales (ERS).<sup>2</sup> It should be

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale—Revised Edition, Updated (ITERS-R), by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. (Teachers College Press, © 2006 by Thelma Harms, Deborah Reid Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford.) Used with permission of the publisher and the authors. All rights reserved.

Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford. (Teachers College Press, © 1989 by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford.) Used with permission of the publisher and the authors. All rights reserved. (Used in Tennessee during Program Years 1-9.)

Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale—Revised Edition (ECCERS-R) by Thelma Harms. Debby

Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale—Revised Edition (FCCERS-R) by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. (Teachers College Press, © 2007 by Thelma Harms, Deborah Reid Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford.) Used with permission of the publisher and the authors. All rights reserved.

School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS), by Thelma Harms, Ellen Vineberg Jacobs, and Donna Romano White. (Teachers College Press, © 1996 by Thelma Harms, Ellen Vineberg Jacobs, and Donna Romano White.) Used with permission of the publisher and the authors. All rights reserved.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Report Card Program includes those agencies that scored at the 0-star level; the Star Quality Program excludes these agencies as well as those that do not choose to participate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The ERS used in Tennessee's child care assessments are the following:

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale—Revised Edition, Updated (ECERS-R), by Thelma Harms,
Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer. (Teachers College Press, © 2005 by Thelma Harms, Richard
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noted that the authors maintain that, for all of the scales, the goal of a home or classroom is to reach a score of "5" of a possible "7," and the goal for an agency is to reach an overall program assessment score of "5".

#### **Scope and Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to analyze the assessment scores for all child care agencies evaluated during the tenth program year, or Year 10, of the Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program, defined as October 1, 2010, through September 30, 2011.<sup>3</sup> The report will compare the Year 10 results to the results for Year 1 (the baseline year) and Year 9 (the previous year).<sup>4</sup> On occasion, Year 10 scores will be compared to Year 5 scores; Year 5 will be used as a second baseline year because the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) introduced substantial changes in the child care system during Year 6. The report examines scores on all components of the report card evaluation, with special emphasis on the *program assessment* component.

#### **Evaluation Process**

Participation in the Report Card Program is required for all child care agencies in Tennessee that are licensed or approved by DHS. A limited number of agencies licensed by the Tennessee Department of Education choose to participate if they so desire. Evaluations are conducted annually as the agency renews its license.

The evaluation process can be described as follows: The assigned DHS Licensing staff, a program evaluator, collects all pertinent information on the agency to determine its eligibility for a license. After the agency's information has been reviewed and verified, the program evaluator completes an initial report card and issues the center's license. Family and group homes<sup>5</sup> are evaluated on five components: *professional development*, *parent/family involvement*, *business management*, *developmental learning*, and *program assessment*. Child care centers are evaluated on seven components: *director qualifications*, *professional development*, *parent/family involvement*, *ratio and group size*, *staff* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The licensing program year and program assessment year are defined with different parameters in this report. The program assessment of an agency takes place approximately 2 months prior to its licensing evaluation. The licensing program year begins October 1 and ends September 30, although the program assessment program year begins August 1 and ends July 31. However, the samples include approximately the same number of agencies because the data are pulled by the program year designation rather than by date range.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Please see these reports for data on previous years: Child Care Evaluation and Report Card Program Legislative Report for Year 1 results; Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program Year 3 Annual Report for Year 2 and Year 3 results; Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program Year 4 Annual Report; Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program Year 5 Annual Report; Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program Year 6 Annual Report; Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program Year 7 Annual Report; Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program Year 8 Annual Report; and Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program Year 9 Annual Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Family homes serve five to seven children; group homes serve 8 to 12 children; and child care centers serve 13 or more children.

compensation, developmental learning, and program assessment. The component compliance history was previously included in the evaluation of child care centers but was replaced by developmental learning mid-way through year 9. Licensing program evaluators evaluate the agency on all of the components except for program assessment. (See Appendix for a description of each of the components.)

The annual program assessment is conducted 1 to 2 months before the agency's license is due to expire. DHS Assessment program evaluators or assessors observe each home or selected classroom for at least 3 hours using the appropriate Environment Rating Scale to assess its physical environment, basic care, curriculum, schedule and program structure, and the caregiver's conversations and other interactions with the children. The assessor ends the observation by asking questions about the workings of the classroom that were not observable and inquiring about teachers' educational backgrounds, teachers' participation in professional development training, and characteristics of class members.

If an agency is eligible for the Star Quality Program,<sup>6</sup> the DHS program evaluator includes a letter with report card results informing the agency of the opportunity to participate. Less than 2 percent of agencies choose not to participate in the Star Quality Program.

#### **Organization of the Report**

The *Year 10 Annual Report* begins with an **Introduction**, which defines the purpose and scope of the report. This section provides brief background information on the evaluation process and the organizational structure of the report.

The body of the report is divided into two parts: **Report Card Results** and **Program Assessment Results**. Each of these parts includes a **Methodology** section that describes the sample, analytical techniques, and limitations of that part of the study.

The **Report Card Results** section examines the assessment results for child care agencies evaluated in Year 10. The overall score and the component scores are compared and analyzed across time. Finally, this section details the results of tests for statistical significance and analyzes factors affecting the Year 10 results.

The **Program Assessment Results** section looks more closely at the *program assessment* component of the report card. The program level data are analyzed for statistical significance in two ways: as group scores and as paired scores. This section includes a report on reliability data and caregiver characteristics.

The final section of the report presents **Conclusions**.

The Appendix includes descriptive information on report card program components.

University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research and Public Service \* June 2012

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> To be eligible for the Star Quality Program, a provider must be in compliance with DHS Licensing standards and must earn at least 1 star on the *program assessment* component of the report card.

#### **Part I: Report Card Results**

This section reports and analyzes scores for the Report Card Program for all agencies evaluated in Program Years 1, 5, 9, and 10 with special focus on those evaluated during Program Year 10 and inclusion of other years for comparison. Year 1 serves as the original base year and Year 5 as a second base year. In Year 5, program assessment scores hit the lowest point since Year 1; in response, DHS instituted revisions to the STARS support system in the latter part of Year 5 and in Year 6.

There are two aspects of the Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program: the mandatory Report Card Program and the voluntary Star Quality Program. The Star Quality Program is restricted to those child care agencies that meet eligibility requirements and choose to participate in the program. Since both programs employ the same evaluation criteria, this section of the study will cover only the results of the more inclusive Report Card Program.<sup>7</sup>

Agencies earn an overall report card score—0, 1, 2, or 3 stars<sup>8</sup>—and a score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 stars on each component that applies to the agency's program.

### **Changes in Report Card Components**

The report card rules were revised after a year-long process involving informational meetings/presentations and seven public hearings held across the state; the revised rules became effective in January 2009. The significant changes that relate to the report card component areas and the overall star-rating were the following: (1) In Year 8, the *compliance history* component was removed and transformed into a threshold item that is used to determine eligibility for participation in the star-quality program; (2) The *developmental learning* component was introduced to the report card matrix, but was not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The Report Card Program includes those agencies that scored at the 0-star level; the Star Quality Program excludes these agencies as well as those that do not choose to participate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Although stars are not actually awarded in the Report Card Program (only in the Star Quality Program), the term "star-rating" is applied to the results because the scoring system is identical to that used in the Star Quality Program.

implemented or scored until January 2010; (3) The number of bonus points awarded to those programs accredited by a recognized national body was increased from one to two. The full text of the rules can be found on the State website:

http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1240/1240.htm

#### Methodology

#### **Description of the Sample**

In December 2011, The University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) received an extract of report card scores from the Tennessee Child Care Management System (TCCMS) and the Regulated Adult and Child Care System (RACCS) database administered by DHS. After cleaning and coding the extract, the final sample included 11,664 records.

Program years used for the data analysis of the report card scores are defined as follows:

Year 1	October 1, 2001–September 30, 2002
Year 5	October 1, 2005–September 30, 2006
Year 9	October 1, 2009–September 30, 2010
Year 10	October 1, 2010–September 30, 2011

The report card scores are grouped into program years according to the date of the issuance of the report card to the child care provider by licensing staff.

#### Limitations of the Data

There are several factors that should be noted for their potential to affect the data analysis for this section of the annual report.

- The TCCMS/RACCS database is maintained by DHS and is considered to be secondary data for this analysis. As is the case with all secondary data, the evaluators cannot guarantee the quality of the data.
- The original TCCMS database was not designed for data analysis purposes, and, therefore, has some limitations. Instead of a centralized data entry system, each licensing program evaluator across the state enters his or her own information; therefore, the possibility for systemic bias in data entry exists. On the other hand, the RACCS database contains an inherent "check" for accuracy in that it provides the basis for determining state reimbursements to providers. Thus, data entry errors should be quickly detected and corrected.
- As a working database, the RACCS database is a "live" database. Data are constantly being added and/or changed. Even archival data may be revised in special cases. For

- this reason, any analysis of the data can only provide a snapshot of the data as they existed at the time of download.
- As noted earlier, the data extract for this analysis was pulled in December 2011 in order to meet reporting deadlines. It is possible that some facilities may have had an incomplete Year 10 evaluation at the time of the download, resulting in their being omitted from the Year 10 data.

#### **Data Analysis**

The data analyses employed in this study are descriptive statistics (frequencies, averages, medians, and ranges), univariate analysis of variance (t-tests and Chi-square tests of association), and multivariate analysis of variance. The level of significance used in each case is  $\alpha$ =0.05.

When comparing scores from one year to another (Years 1 and 10 and Years 9 and 10), the analysis is performed in two ways: scores are analyzed as *group scores* and *paired scores*. Each method has an advantage and a disadvantage.

In the group score analysis, all agencies evaluated within the program year are included in the analysis of the group, and the mean scores for the groups are compared. The advantage of this process is that scores for all agencies evaluated during the program year under study are included; on the other hand, the disadvantage of this method is that the groups being studied (for the years being compared) are dissimilar in composition and size (because the agencies in existence are constantly changing).

The paired score analysis, which is used to compare the movement between star-rating levels across years, compares only agencies that were evaluated in both of the two years being studied. For example, if ABC Agency was evaluated in both Year 9 and Year 10, the paired score analysis would include ABC Agency. If ABC Agency was evaluated for only one of the years (for instance, it closed in Year 10), it would not be included in the paired analysis of Year 9 and Year 10 scores. The advantage of the paired score analysis is that the test groups being compared are identically constituted; the disadvantage is that the scope of the analysis is narrowed, as unpaired agencies (those evaluated in only one of the years being studied) are dropped. In order to provide both perspectives, results for both types of analysis are reported.

In each section, the group score analysis is presented as the primary analysis, followed by a supplementary paired score analysis. The statistics reported are based on group scores (comprising all evaluated agencies), unless specified as paired scores.

#### **Research Findings: Overall Report Card Scores**

#### **Distribution of Scores for All Agencies**

For comparisons of the distribution of report card scores across the years, Year 1 serves as the original baseline, and Year 5 serves as the baseline for the revised STARS support system. In Year 5, DHS undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the STARS system, <sup>9</sup> which included interviews with providers, staff, and administrators across the state. The primary impetus for this system wide evaluation was a steady decline in average report card and program assessment scores for 3 straight years. On the heels of the departmental study, the Tennessee Office of the Comptroller undertook an evaluation of the STARS program, issuing a report with similar findings. After studying the evaluation results, DHS made substantial changes in the STARS program beginning in Year 5 and in Year 6, including widespread implementation of Targeted Technical Assistance (TTA), extensive training in the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) for Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) specialists, the establishment of ERS liaisons in each CCR&R site, enhanced coordination between partner groups, setting up the practice of contacting every provider upon the receipt of assessment results, and launching of the Provider Self-Assessment and Mentoring (PSAM) services in 2008.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1 presents a comparison of the distribution of scores in Years 1 and 10. The improvements for providers over the last 10 years are dramatic (noted by comparing the proportions in the 0-star and 3-star categories).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> What Is Working? What Is Not Working? Report on the Qualitative Study of the Tennessee Report Card and Star-Quality Program and Support System, November 2006, http://www.state.tn.us/humansery/adfam/rept\_insides.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> See Pope, Koelz, Denny, & Cheatham (2009) and Graves, Koelz, Magda, & Denny (2010) for evaluation reports on PSAM.

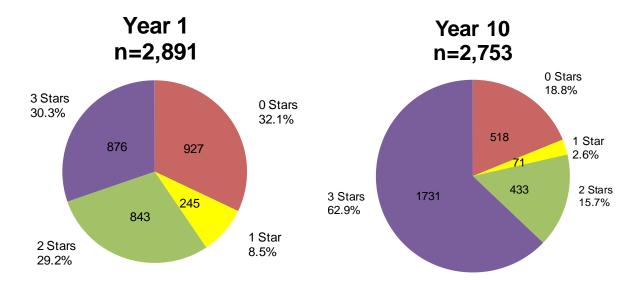


Figure 1. Distribution of Report Card Scores for All Evaluated Agencies for Years 1 and 10

Figure 2 shows the comparison of the distribution of scores in Year 5 with Year 10. Year 5 represents a second baseline for the Report Card Program, as substantive changes in the STARS report card support system were implemented the following year. Again, there is evidence of significant improvement of scores over the last 5 years. Figure 3 shows that in Year 10, when compared to Year 9, the percentage of agencies earning a 3-star report card rating did not change; however there was some change in the distribution across the other three categories.

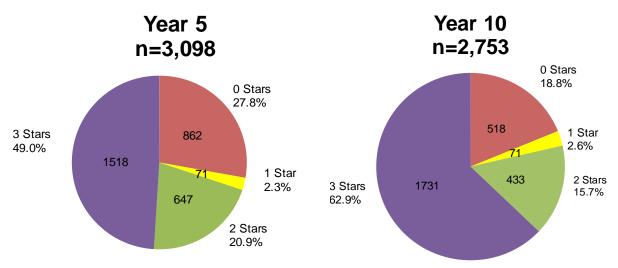


Figure 2. Distribution of Report Card Scores for All Evaluated Agencies for Years 5 and 10

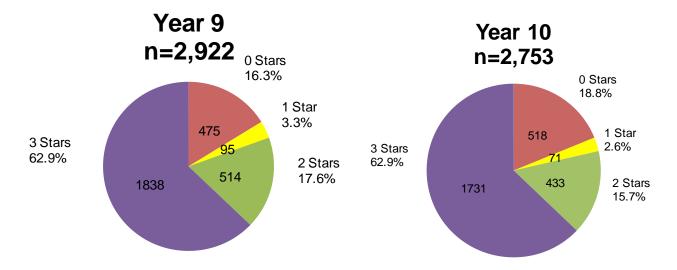


Figure 3. Distribution of Report Card Scores for All Evaluated Agencies for Years 9 and 10

To gain historical perspective on the 2-years comparisons, Figure 4 presents the distribution of report card scores for Years 1, 5, 9, and 10—indicating uneven but steady progress.

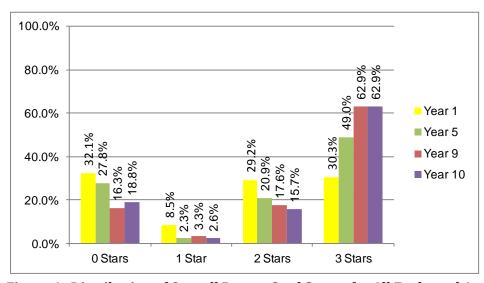


Figure 4. Distribution of Overall Report Card Scores for All Evaluated Agencies, Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

#### **Distribution of Report Card Scores for Provider Types**

Table 1 presents the distribution of overall report card scores for Years 1 through 10 for **child care centers** and **family/group homes**, and Figures 5 and 6 graphically present these data. A positive movement in report card scores can be observed across time for **child care centers**. After a positive movement of scores from Year 1 through Year 9, **family/group** 

**homes** experienced a decrease in scores during Year 10. With the introduction of the FCCERS-R in Year 10, this negative movement for **family/group homes** was anticipated.

Table 1. The Distribution of Overall Report Card Scores for Child Care Centers and Family/Group Homes, Years 1–10

	Child Ca	re Cente	ers										
	0 st	tars	1 :	star	2 s	tars	3 st	ars	тот	AL*			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Year 1	569	30.0	122	6.4	527	27.8	681	35.9	1,899	100.1			
Year 2	423	19.8	84	3.9	594	27.8	1,034	48.4	2,135	99.9			
Year 3	433	20.1	54	2.5	506	23.5	1,163	53.9	2,156	100.0			
Year 4	494	23.6	33	1.6	403	19.3	1,163	55.6	2,093	100.1			
Year 5	561	27.9	26	1.3	357	17.8	1,065	53.0	2,009	100.0			
Year 6	380	19.0	24	1.2	360	18.0	1,236	61.8	2,000	100.0			
Year 7	366	18.5	19	1.0	353	17.9	1,239	62.7	1,976	100.1			
Year 8	344	17.9	25	1.3	336	17.5	1,213	63.2	1,918	99.9			
Year 9	312	16.3	35	1.8	318	16.6	1,250	65.3	1,915	100.0			
Year 10	261	14.2	38	2.1	286	15.6	1,252	68.2	1,837	100.1			
	Family/Group Homes												
	0 s	tars	1	star	2 s	tars	3 stars		TOTAL*				
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Year 1	358	36.1	123	12.4	316	31.9	195	19.7	992	100.1			
Year 2	293	27.3	79	7.4	315	29.4	385	35.9	1,072	100.0			
Year 3	297	27.1	43	3.9	328	30.0	426	38.9	1,094	99.9			
Year 4	301	26.0	60	5.2	341	29.4	457	39.4	1,159	100.0			
Year 5	301	27.6	45	4.1	290	26.6	453	41.6	1,089	99.9			
Year 6	214	21.1	29	2.9	262	25.9	507	50.1	1,012	100.0			
Year 7	182	17.9	30	3.0	252	24.8	552	54.3	1,016	100.0			
Year 8	192	19.1	42	4.2	202	20.1	567	56.5	1,003	100.0			
Year 9	163	16.2	60	6.0	196	19.5	588	58.4	1,007	100.0			
Year 10	257	28.1	33	3.6	147	16.0	479	52.3	916	100.0			

<sup>\*</sup>Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

The data in Table 1 for Years 1, 5, 9, and 10 are portrayed graphically in Figures 5 and 6, showing the progress in report card scores over the 10 years.

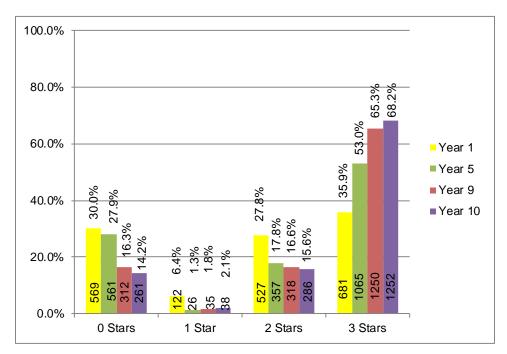


Figure 5. Distribution of Overall Report Card Scores for All Evaluated Child Care Centers for Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

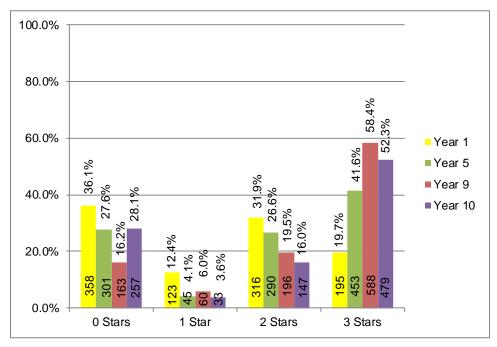


Figure 6. Distribution of Overall Report Card Scores for All Evaluated Family and Group Homes for Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

As can be seen in Table 2, the average overall score for both **centers** and **homes** increased from Year 1 to Year 9, with the average overall score for **centers** increasing again between

Year 9 and Year 10. However, the average overall score for **homes** decreased in Year 10. This decrease in score can be attributed to the introduction of the FCCERS-R scale in Year 10.

Table 2. Average Report Card Scores for All Evaluated Agencies, Child Care Centers, and Family and Group Homes for Years 1–10\*

	All evaluate	ed agencies	Child Car	e Centers	Family and G	iroup Homes
	#	Mean	#	Mean	#	Mean
Year 1	2,891	1.58	1,899	1.70	992	1.35
Year 2	3,207	1.95	2,135	2.05	1,072	1.74
Year 3	3,250	2.01	2,156	2.11	1,094	1.81
Year 4	3,252	1.98	2,093	2.07	1,159	1.82
Year 5	3,098	1.91	2,009	1.96	1,089	1.82
Year 6	3,012	2.17	2,000	2.23	1,012	2.05
Year 7	2,993	2.22	1,977	2.25	1,016	2.16
Year 8	2,921	2.22	1,918	2.26	1,003	2.14
Year 9	2,922	2.27	1,915	2.31	1,007	2.20
Year 10	2,753	2.23	1837	2.38	916	1.93

<sup>\*</sup>Report card scores range from 0 to 3.

#### **Statistical Analysis**

In order to determine if the changes in overall report card mean scores are a result of normal variation or are an indication of real change, a statistical test (*t*-test) was applied to the average scores to determine if a statistically significant difference exists. (This analysis is called the "grouped score" analysis in this report, to distinguish it from the "paired score" analysis; in a grouped score analysis, all agencies evaluated in the relevant program years are included in the groups that are compared.) The results for both subgroups are as follows:

#### Year 1 and Year 10—Grouped-score analysis

- The change in overall report card mean scores for **child care centers** (from 1.70 to 2.38) is statistically significant (p = .0001), indicating a real and substantial increase.
- Because of the implementation of FCCERS-R, the change in overall report card mean scores for family/group homes (from 1.35 to 1.93) was not tested.

#### Year 9 and Year 10—Grouped-score analysis

- The change in overall report card mean scores for **child care centers** (from 2.31 to 2.38) is *not* statistically significant, indicating no real change.
- The change in overall report card mean scores for **family/group homes** (from 2.20 to 1.93) was not tested due to the implementation of the FCCERS-R scale in Year 10.

#### **Component Scores**

The overall report card score is based upon scores on specific components. Agencies earn a score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 stars on each component that applies to the agency's program. A description of the components is included in the Appendix.

In Years 1–7, child care centers were scored on seven components, and family and group homes were scored on five components. Midway through Year 8, the *compliance history* component was changed into a threshold item for the Star Quality Program. For that reason, data for the *compliance history* component after Year 7 are not included in this report. Midway through Year 9, the *developmental learning* component was added to the report card. Because scores for this component, in that year, reflect only the latter part of Year 9 (January–September 2010), a comparison with Year 10 data was not conducted.

#### **Distribution of Scores**

The distributions of component scores for Years 1 through 10 are displayed in Tables 3 and 4. The following observation can be made:

- A comparison of data from Year 1 through Year 10 for both subgroups (centers and family/group homes) shows that there is a trend toward a decrease in the proportion of agencies in the 0-star category and an increase in the 3-star category, with very few exceptions.
- This trend continues in all components for centers and for all components except program assessment for family/group homes. Again this is not unexpected with the introduction of the FCCERS-R scale in Year 10.

Table 3. Distribution of Report Card and Component Scores for Child Care Centers, Years 1–10

	Child co	re cente	rs								
	0 s	tars	1 9	star	2 s	tars	3 st	tars	Total		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#		
	Directo	r qualific	ations								
Year 1	361	19.0	120	6.3	313	16.5	1,103	58.1	1,897		
Year 2	317	14.9	106	5.0	381	17.9	1,324	62.2	2,128		
Year 3	242	11.2	81	3.8	404	18.8	1,425	66.2	2,152		
Year 4	210	10.0	78	3.7	389	18.6	1,415	67.6	2,092		
Year 5	220	11.0	57	2.8	347	17.3	1,381	68.9	2,005		
Year 6	182	9.1	47	2.4	342	17.1	1,427	71.4	1,998		
Year 7	158	8.0	49	2.5	367	18.6	1,403	71.0	1,977		
Year 8	182	9.5	46	2.4	374	19.5	1,316	68.6	1,918		
Year 9	197	10.3	46	2.4	374	19.5	1,298	67.8	1,915		
Year 10	203	11.1	35	1.9	348	18.9	1,251	68.1	1,837		
Professional development											
Year 1	787	41.5	157	8.3	327	17.2	625	33.0	1,896		
Year 2	614	28.8	181	8.5	407	19.1	928	43.6	2,130		
Year 3	515	23.9	156	7.2	379	17.6	1,106	51.3	2,156		
Year 4	419	20.0	137	6.5	343	16.4	1,194	57.0	2,093		
Year 5	396	19.7	134	6.7	317	15.8	1,162	57.8	2,009		
Year 6	349	17.5	118	5.9	303	15.2	1,228	61.5	1,998		
Year 7	309	15.6	111	5.6	344	17.4	1,212	61.3	1,976		
Year 8	304	15.8	94	4.9	284	14.8	1,236	64.4	1,918		
Year 9	244	12.7	86	4.5	301	15.7	1,284	67.0	1,915		
Year 10	237	12.9	61	3.3	231	12.6	1,308	71.2	1,837		
	Compli	ance hist	ory*						•		
Year 1	46	2.4	2	0.1	3	0.2	1,848	97.3	1,899		
Year 2	44	2.1	1	0.0	3	0.1	2,087	97.8	2,135		
Year 3	65	3.0	2	0.1	5	0.2	2,084	96.7	2,156		
Year 4	39	1.9	0	0.0	4	0.2	2,050	97.9	2,093		
Year 5	41	2.0	0	0.0	3	0.1	1,965	97.8	2,009		
Year 6	22	1.1	1	0.1	2	0.1	1,975	98.8	2,000		
Year 7	27	1.4	1	0.1	4	0.2	1,939	98.4	1,971		
	Parent,	family in	volveme	nt							
Year 1	241	12.7	238	12.5	419	22.1	1,001	52.7	1,899		
Year 2	163	7.6	197	9.2	439	20.6	1,334	62.5	2,133		
Year 3	124	5.8	147	6.8	406	18.8	1,479	68.6	2,156		
Year 4	93	4.4	155	7.4	344	16.4	1,501	71.7	2,093		
Year 5	94	4.7	118	5.9	283	14.1	1,514	75.4	2,009		
Year 6	75	3.8	97	4.9	268	13.4	1,560	78.0	2,000		
Year 7	60	3.0	92	4.7	267	13.5	1,558	78.8	1,977		
Year 8	100	5.2	81	4.2	227	11.8	1,510	78.7	1,918		
Year 9	112	5.8	49	2.6	218	11.4	1,536	80.2	1,915		

	Child co	are cente	rs									
	0 s	tars	1 s	tar	2 s	tars	3 st	ars	Total			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#			
	Parent,	family in	volveme	nt								
Year 10	96	5.2	35	1.9	180	9.8	1,526	83.1	1,837			
_		roup size										
Year 1	379	20.0	352	18.5	308	16.2	859	45.3	1,898			
Year 2	184	8.6	410	19.2	401	18.8	1,135	53.3	2,130			
Year 3	124	5.8	405	18.8	395	18.3	1,229	57.1	2,153			
Year 4	102	4.9	382	18.3	356	17.0	1,252	59.8	2,092			
Year 5	95	4.7	341	17.0	353	17.6	1,220	60.7	2,009			
Year 6	86	4.3	333	16.7	334	16.7	1,247	62.4	2,000			
Year 7	83	4.2	318	16.1	326	16.5	1,250	63.2	1,977			
Year 8	69	3.6	290	15.1	316	16.5	1,243	64.8	1,918			
Year 9	58	3.0	243	12.7	303	15.8	1,311	68.5	1,915			
Year 10	49	2.7	217	11.8	311	16.9	1,260	68.6	1,837			
	Staff compensation											
Year 1	188	9.9	90	4.7	210	11.1	1,410	74.3	1,898			
Year 2	125	5.9	63	3.0	172	8.1	1,770	83.1	2,130			
Year 3	94	4.4	48	2.2	151	7.0	1,860	86.4	2,153			
Year 4	84	4.0	35	1.7	123	5.9	1,851	88.4	2,093			
Year 5	61	3.0	34	1.7	107	5.3	1,805	89.9	2,007			
Year 6	35	1.8	24	1.2	96	4.8	1,844	92.2	1,999			
Year 7	33	1.7	26	1.3	83	4.2	1,833	92.8	1,975			
Year 8	34	1.8	27	1.4	87	4.5	1,770	92.3	1,918			
Year 9	49	2.6	24	1.3	67	3.5	1,775	92.7	1,915			
Year 10	42	2.3	23	1.3	52	2.8	1,720	93.6	1,837			
	Prograi	m assessr	nent**									
Year 1	550	29.0	347	18.3	370	19.5	630	33.2	1,897			
Year 2	397	18.6	377	17.7	501	23.5	854	40.1	2,129			
Year 3	396	18.4	427	19.8	546	25.3	785	36.4	2,154			
Year 4	481	23.0	410	19.6	482	23.0	720	34.4	2,093			
Year 5	542	27.0	419	20.9	450	22.4	595	29.7	2,006			
Year 6	370	18.5	351	17.6	483	24.2	795	39.8	1,999			
Year 7	354	17.9	314	15.9	411	20.8	896	45.4	1,975			
Year 8	335	17.5	293	15.3	440	22.9	850	44.3	1,918			
Year 9	300	15.7	304	15.9	435	22.7	876	45.7	1,915			
Year 10	244	13.3	245	13.3	411	22.4	937	51.0	1,837			

	Child co	Child care centers											
	0 s	tars	1 s	tar	2 stars 3 stars			tars	Total				
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#				
	Developmental Learning***												
Year 9	143	11.5	23	1.9	54	4.4	1,021	82.3	1,241				
Year 10	158	8.6	34	1.9	68	3.7	1,576	85.8	1,836				

<sup>\*</sup>The compliance history component was removed from the report card in the middle of Year 8 (January 2009).

Table 4. Distribution of Report Card and Component Scores for Family/Group Homes, Years 1–10

		/group h									
		tars	1 st		2 st		3 st		TOTAL*		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#		
	Profes	sional de	velopme								
Year 1	531	53.5	146	14.7	195	19.7	120	12.1	992		
Year 2	456	42.6	138	12.9	274	25.6	203	19.0	1,071		
Year 3	417	38.1	143	13.1	324	29.6	210	19.2	1,094		
Year 4	413	35.6	152	13.1	339	29.2	255	22.0	1,159		
Year 5	358	32.9	140	12.9	330	30.3	261	24.0	1,089		
Year 6	276	27.3	145	14.3	322	31.8	269	26.6	1,012		
Year 7	266	26.2	122	12.0	326	32.1	302	29.7	1,016		
Year 8	234	23.3	82	8.2	365	36.4	322	32.1	1,003		
Year 9	197	19.6	75	7.4	371	36.8	364	36.1	1,007		
Year 10	156	17.0	70	7.6	335	36.6	355	38.8	916		
Compliance history*											
Year 1	10	1.0	0	0.0	2	0.2	980	98.8	992		
Year 2	12	1.1	1	0.1	2	0.2	1,057	98.6	1,072		
Year 3	19	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,075	98.3	1,094		
Year 4	15	1.3	0	0.0	3	0.3	1,141	98.4	1,159		
Year 5	8	0.7	1	0.1	2	0.2	1,078	99.0	1,089		
Year 6	9	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,003	99.1	1,012		
Year 7	6	0.6	0	0.0	3	0.3	1,002	99.1	1,011		
	Parent	/family i	nvolvem	ent							
Year 1	91	9.2	306	30.8	118	11.9	477	48.1	992		
Year 2	64	6.0	241	22.5	99	9.2	667	62.3	1,071		
Year 3	56	5.1	200	18.3	101	9.2	736	67.3	1,093		
Year 4	51	4.4	186	16.0	101	8.7	821	70.8	1,159		
Year 5	54	5.0	145	13.3	82	7.5	808	74.2	1,089		
Year 6	41	4.1	117	11.6	64	6.3	790	78.1	1,012		
Year 7	38	3.7	107	10.5	51	5.0	820	80.7	1,016		
Year 8	104	10.4	60	6.0	76	7.6	763	76.1	1,003		

<sup>\*\*</sup>The *n* for the *program assessment* component score (reported in Part I) differs from the *n* for the *program assessment* overall score (reported in Part II) because the data are drawn from two different databases.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>The developmental learning component was added to the report card in the middle of Year 9 (January 2010); thus, the sample size is smaller in Year 9 than in Year 10.

	Family	/group h	omes						
	0 s	tars	1 st	ar	2 st	tars	3 s <sup>+</sup>	tars	TOTAL*
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
	Parent	/family i	nvolveme	ent					
Year 9	118	11.7	42	4.2	70	7.0	777	77.2	1,007
Year 10	97	10.6	37	4.0	41	4.5	741	80.9	916
	Busine	ess manag	gement						
Year 1	250	25.3	110	11.1	271	27.4	359	36.3	990
Year 2	176	16.5	76	7.1	231	21.6	585	54.8	1,068
Year 3	109	10.0	79	7.2	205	18.8	700	64.0	1,093
Year 4	100	8.6	69	6.0	187	16.1	802	69.3	1,158
Year 5	97	8.9	55	5.1	148	13.6	789	72.5	1,089
Year 6	62	6.1	42	4.2	136	13.5	771	76.3	1,011
Year 7	58	5.7	36	3.5	116	11.4	806	79.3	1,016
Year 8	42	4.2	34	3.4	81	8.1	846	84.3	1,003
Year 9	39	3.9	26	2.6	54	5.4	888	88.2	1,007
Year 10	35	3.8	22	2.4	39	4.3	820	89.5	916
	Progra	ım assess	ment**						
Year 1	342	34.5	191	19.3	191	19.3	268	27.0	992
Year 2	282	26.4	181	16.9	201	18.8	406	37.9	1,070
Year 3	287	26.3	209	19.1	231	21.2	365	33.4	1,092
Year 4	296	25.5	267	23.0	267	23.0	329	28.4	1,159
Year 5	295	27.1	229	21.0	234	21.5	331	30.4	1,089
Year 6	209	20.7	169	16.7	212	20.9	422	41.7	1,012
Year 7	174	17.1	171	16.8	187	18.4	484	47.6	1,016
Year 8	180	17.9	174	17.3	193	19.2	456	45.5	1,003
Year 9	158	15.7	141	14.0	223	22.1	485	48.2	1,007
Year 10	248	27.1	147	16.0	177	19.3	344	37.6	916
	Develo	omental L	earning*	***					
Year 9	121	17.5	23	3.3	20	2.9	529	76.3	693
Year 10	135	14.7	38	4.1	25	2.7	718	78.4	916

<sup>\*</sup>The compliance history component was removed from the report card in the middle of Year 8 (January 2009).

<sup>\*\*</sup>The *n* for the *program assessment* component score (reported in Part I) differs from the *n* for the *program assessment* overall score (reported in Part II) because the data are drawn from two different databases.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>The developmental learning component was added to the report card in the middle of Year 9 (January 2010); thus, the sample size is smaller in Year 9 than in Year 10.

The components with the percentage of **child care centers** earning 3 stars in Year 10 are listed in rank order below.

Staff compensation	93.6%
Developmental learning	85.8%
Parent/family involvement	83.1%
Professional development	71.2%
Ratio/group size	68.6%
Director qualifications	68.1%
Program assessment	51.0%

The components with the percentage of **family and group homes** earning 3 stars in Year 10 are listed in rank order below.

Business management	89.5%
Parent/family involvement	80.9%
Developmental learning	78.4%
Professional development	38.8%
Program assessment	37.6%

#### **Statistical Analysis**

In order to assess the statistical significance of the movement in component scores from Year 9 to Year 10, a multivariate analysis of variance test of the differences in average scores was applied. This test determines if the change in scores was a result of normal variation or if this represents a real change.

The results of the statistical analysis of component scores are as follows:

#### Year 1 and Year 10—Grouped-score analysis

• The increases in average scores for *all six* components available for comparison for **child care centers** are statistically significant (*p* = .0001). The developmental learning component is not included in this analysis because it was introduced as a new

- component mid-way through Year 9, and the sample may not be representative of the population of providers.
- The increases in average scores for the *three* components available for comparison for the **family/group home** report card are statistically significant (*p* = .0001). The program assessment component was not included because FCCERS-R was introduced in Year 10. The developmental learning component was not included in the Year 10 analysis because it was introduced as a new component mid-way through Year 9, and the sample may not be representative of the population of providers.

#### Year 9 and Year10—Grouped-score analysis

- The changes in average scores are not statistically significant for *five* of the six components for **child care centers**. The change in average scores for *program assessment* is statistically significant (*p* = .0005). The *developmental learning* component was not included in this analysis.
- The change in average scores is not statistically significant for all three components for family/group homes. The program assessment and developmental learning components were not included in the Year 10 analysis.

#### Movement in Scores in Year 10

#### Movement in overall report card ratings

The movement in overall report card scores between Years 9 and 10 are presented in Table 5. For comparison, a similar table (Table 6) shows movement in scores between Years 8 and 9.

Table 5. Movement in Overall Report Card Star-Rating Scores from Year 9 to Year 10\*

All paired agencies	Increased 1, 2, or 3 star levels		•	e same ing	Decreased 1, 2, or 3 star levels	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Child Care Centers	230 <sup>1</sup>	13.6	1,271	75.4	185 <sup>2</sup>	11.0
Family and Group Homes	105 <sup>3</sup>	12.7	524	63.1	201 <sup>4</sup>	24.2
All Providers	335 <sup>5</sup>	13.3	1,795 <sup>6</sup>	71.3	386 <sup>7</sup>	15.3

<sup>\*</sup>Includes agencies with a 0-star rating

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Of these, 116 (50.4%) increased 1 level, 52 (22.6%) increased 2 levels, and 62 (27.0%) increased 3 levels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Of these, 80 (43.2%) decreased 1 level, 54 (29.2%) decreased 2 levels, and 51 (27.6%) decreased 3 levels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Of these, 61 (58.1%) increased 1 level, 21 (20.0%) increased 2 levels, and 23 (21.9%) increased 3 levels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Of these, 68 (33.8%) decreased 1 level, 54 (26.9%) decreased 2 levels, and 79 (39.3%) decreased 3 levels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Of these, 177(52.8%) increased 1 level, 73 (21.8%) increased 2 levels, and 85 (25.4%) increased 3 levels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Of these, 1,406 (78.3%) were agencies that maintained their 3-star rating.

 $<sup>^{7}</sup>$ Of these, 148 (38.3%) decreased 1 level, 108 (28.0%) decreased 2 levels, and 130 (33.7%) decreased 3 levels

Table 6. Movement in Overall Report Card Star-Rating Scores from Year 8 to Year 9\*11

All paired agencies		l 1, 2, or 3 evels	•	e same ing	Decreased 1, 2, or 3 star levels	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Child Care Centers	263	15.5	1,244	73.3	190	11.2
Family and Group Homes	149	18.1	548	66.4	128	15.5

<sup>\*</sup>Includes agencies with a 0-star rating

Year 9 and Year 10 star-rating data for providers was paired and analyzed to explore the movement in overall report card star-ratings between Years 9 and 10. The following are noteworthy observations:

- The majority (83.6%) of **all providers** either maintained or increased their overall report card star-rating. Of these, 1,406 (78.3%) maintained their 3-star rating.
- A larger proportion of **child care centers** increased rather than decreased their rating.
- During Year 10, a substantial proportion of family/group homes decreased rather
  than increased their rating, in large part due to the use of a new version of the
  environment rating scale (FCCERS-R).<sup>12</sup> As was evident in Year 5 when ITERS-R was
  introduced, assessment scores decreased as providers adjusted to the demands of a
  new scale. Program assessment scores increased in subsequent years.

A comparison of the movement in star-rating scores between data in Tables 5 and 6 shows that there are some observations to note:

- For **child care centers**, the movement of star-ratings from Year 9 to Year 10 did not differ significantly from the movement between Years 8 and 9.
- For family/group homes, the proportion who maintained the same star-rating from year to year was similar; however, the proportion that decreased between Years 9 and 10 was much greater than that between Year 8 and Year 9. The data in Table 7 supports the notion that the use of a revised tool to assess the program assessment component explains this dramatic decrease.

#### Movement in component scores

The movement in component scores between Years 9 and 10 is presented in Table 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Table 6 was taken from the Year 9 Report using a data extract retrieved in January 2011. Totals reflect data available at that time. See Graves & Magda (2011) for further explanation of data extract.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The FCCERS-R is considered to be a much more rigorous scale than the FDCRS (which was used in Years 1 through 9), and the requirements of the FCCERS-R are equivalent to those of the ECERS-R and ITERS-R scales.

Table 7. Movement in Report Card Component Scores from Year 9 to Year 10\*

Child care centers (n = 1,686)	Increased 1, 2, or 3 star levels		Kept the same rating		Decreased 1, 2, or 3 star levels	
Component scores	#	%	#	%	#	%
Program assessment	439	26.0	934	55.4	313	18.6
Professional development	222	13.2	1,288	76.4	176	10.4
Ratio and group size	202	12.0	1,300	77.1	184	10.9
Director qualifications	158	9.4	1,385	82.1	143	8.5
Parent/family involvement	149	8.8	1,437	85.2	100	5.9
Staff compensation	51	3.0	1,589	94.2	46	2.7
Overall score	230	13.6	1,271	75.4	185	11.0
Family and group homes (n = 830)						
Component scores (ranked by % decrease):	#	%	#	%	#	%
Program assessment	157	18.9	352	42.4	321	38.7
Professional development	108	13.0	665	80.1	57	6.9
Parent/family involvement	84	10.1	688	82.9	58	7.0
Business management	52	6.3	741	89.3	37	4.5
Overall score	105	12.7	524	63.1	201	24.2

<sup>\*</sup>Includes agencies with a 0-star rating.

The developmental learning component was not included in this table because the component was introduced in the middle of Year 9, leaving a sample of providers that may not be representative of the population.

A comparison of the movement in report card component scores displayed in Table 7 resulted in the following noteworthy observations:

- For both child care centers and family/group homes, most providers maintained the same star level from Year 9 to Year 10 in all components except program assessment.
- A larger percentage of child care centers increased rather than decreased their starrating level, whereas the opposite was true for family/group homes providers. The data in Table 7 supports the notion that the use of a revised tool to assess the program assessment component explains this dramatic decrease.

# **Part II: Program Assessment Results**

In Part II of the report, the focus shifts to the *program assessment* component of the report card. The assessment scores for the baseline Year 1 and Year 5 and the most recent Year 9 and Year 10 program years are reported and analyzed. The *program assessment* data are analyzed as group scores and as paired scores, as was done for the overall report card scores.

# Methodology

# **Description of the Sample**

Program assessment data are drawn from the STARS program assessment database administered by SWORPS. An extract of program assessment scores for the first 10 program years was compiled in early January 2012. Each program year begins on August 1.

#### Limitations of the Data

There are several factors that should be noted for their potential to affect the data analysis for this section of the annual report.

- Caution is always necessary when reviewing scores from standardized instruments. Instruments may show variation from one year to the next due to changes and updates in the interpretation of particular items.
- The TCCMS/RACCS identification codes assigned to child care agencies are sometimes changed for a variety of reasons. Efforts were made to identify code changes and match *program assessment* data; even so, a small percentage of provider scores were unable to be matched.
- As a working database, the SWORPS database is a "live" database. Data are
  constantly being added and/or changed. Even archival data may be revised in
  special cases. For this reason, any analysis of the data can only provide a snapshot of
  the data as they existed at the time of download.

 As noted earlier, the Year 10 data extract for this analysis was pulled in January 2012 in order to meet reporting deadlines. It is possible that some facilities may have had an incomplete Year 10 evaluation at the time of the download, resulting in their being omitted from the Year 10 data.

# **Data Analysis**

The data analyses employed in this study were descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, averages, medians, ranges), univariate analyses (t-tests and Chi-square test of association), and multivariate analysis of variance. In each test, the level of significance applied is  $\alpha$  = 0.05.

# Levels of analysis

The *program assessment* results reported in Part II are analyzed at two levels:

- The overall program assessment score, also called the "provider score," which for centers is the average of the Environment Rating Scale scores used in the assessment of the appropriate classrooms, and for family/group homes is the equivalent of the FCCERS-R scale score;
- 2. The observation score, sometimes called the "classroom score" for centers is the score earned on the Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R, ECCERS-R, and SACERS) in the selected classrooms of centers; for family/group homes, the observation score is the score earned on the FCCERS-R.

# Group and pairwise analysis

Additionally, the overall *program assessment* results are analyzed in two ways: as *group scores* and as *paired scores*. The group score analysis includes scores for all agencies evaluated during the program year in which their license expired. Since agencies are constantly opening and closing, the groups that are compared (Year 1 compared to Year 10, or Year 9 compared to Year 10) are dissimilar in composition and size.

The paired score analysis used to analyze movement of star levels between years examines only the agencies that were evaluated in both Years 9 and 10. Agencies that were evaluated in only one of the two years being studied are dropped from the paired score analysis. In the paired score analysis, the groups being compared are identical in composition and size. <sup>13</sup>

#### **Program Assessment Process**

Assessors observe each home or selected classroom for at least 3 hours using the appropriate Environment Rating Scale to assess its physical environment, basic care, curriculum, schedule, program structure, and the caregiver's conversations and other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> It should be noted that the paired score analysis can only be applied at the agency level (to the overall program assessment score) and not at the observation or classroom level. Since classrooms are randomly selected for assessment, pairing scores at this level is not possible.

interactions with the children. The assessor then submits the rating score sheet and explanatory notes to SWORPS, where the *overall program assessment score* is automatically calculated from the *classroom/home observation scores* using the DHS scoring logic.

The *observation score* is the score obtained when an assessor uses one of the four Environment Rating Scales (ITERS-R, ECERS-R, SACERS, or FCCERS-R) to assess a classroom or family/group home. In the case of a family or group home, only one observation is made and one observation score is recorded. For a child care center, the number of observations depends upon the size of the center and the number of classrooms for each age group where at least 25% of all classrooms are observed. The overall score is based on the average of the classroom observation scores unless the program has a classroom with a score of 2.99 or lower. In that case, the lowest classroom score is used as the *overall program assessment* score. If a classroom scores below 3.00, that classroom is considered to be providing inadequate child care. The rationale is that parents should be made aware of this situation when it occurs, and they would not be if an inadequate classroom score were obscured in an average of all classroom scores.<sup>14</sup>

Each of the Environment Rating Scales<sup>15</sup> was designed for use with a specific age group or type of child care program. The four scales are:

- Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)—for use with group programs that serve children up to 2½ years of age. Thirty-two items of this scale are used in Tennessee.
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)—for use with group programs that serve children from 2½ to 5 years of age. Thirty-seven items of this scale are used in Tennessee.
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)—for use with before and afterschool group care programs that serve children from 5 to 12 years of age. Thirty-four items of this scale are used in Tennessee.
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale—Revised Edition (FCCERS-R)—for use with child care programs in family and group homes. Thirty-four items of this scale are used in Tennessee.

The assessor scores each of the items on a scale from 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest score. The item scores are then averaged to determine the classroom observation score, which also ranges from 1 to 7.

Once the scoring is complete, SWORPS sends a copy of the results and the assessor's notes to the DHS Licensing Unit. The *overall program assessment score* is used to determine the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> An observation score of 1 is considered to be "inadequate" care; 3 is "minimal" care; 4 is "average" care; 5 is "good" care; and 7 is "excellent" care. Scores of 2 and 6 are not explicitly defined in the scales.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> For full citation, see footnote 2.

agency's rating for the *program assessment* component of the report card. A score of 3.99 or below is equivalent to 0 stars; 4.00–4.49 is equivalent to 1 star; 4.50–4.99 is equivalent to 2 stars; and 5.00 or above is equivalent to 3 stars. An agency must score 1 star or better in *program assessment* and be in compliance with DHS Licensing standards in order to qualify for the Star Quality Program.

### **Assessor Reliability**

DHS assures proper and accurate assessments of child care providers by conducting reliability checks of all assessors who use the Environment Rating Scales and by tracking the reliability of each assessor by maintaining a reliability history. An assessment specialist conducts a reliability check with each assessor on a regular basis.

In a reliability check, an assessment specialist goes with an assessor to conduct the assessment. Both independently (without sharing information) assess the child care program and then afterward debrief and reach a consensus agreement according to the scale requirements. For the assessor to be judged "reliable," her or his assessment must closely match the agreed-upon consensus score, which is based upon what was observed and the appropriate scale requirement.

To ensure that assessors are using the scales reliably and consistently, each assessor's reliability on a scale is scheduled to be checked about every sixth, 12th, or 18th time the assessor uses each scale (depending upon their level of reliability). An assessor's reliability is calculated by averaging the trained assessor's three most recent reliability scores. If that average is 85% or higher, the assessor is considered to be reliable. Assessors and others who lose their reliability on a scale (i.e., the average falls below 85%) cannot conduct observations until their reliability is regained.

The following are the levels of reliability:

- New assessors, or veteran assessors new to any particular scale, have a reliability check about every sixth time they use one of the Environment Rating Scales until they reach a consistent level of reliability.
- Experienced assessors who have demonstrated a consistently verifiable level of reliability are granted "extended reliability" status. Reliability checks of these individuals are extended to every 12th or 15th time they use the scale or every 6 months, whichever occurs first.
- Once an assessor has used the scale for 18 months and maintained a 90% average
  for at least six consecutive reliability checks, they may be eligible to be moved to the
  "veteran extended reliability" status. Reliability checks of these individuals are
  extended to every 18th or 21st time they use the scale or every 6 months,
  whichever occurs first.

 Assessors who have not used a particular scale for 2 to 3 months are scheduled for a reliability check prior to their being scheduled to conduct an assessment using that scale.

# **Research Findings: Overall Program Assessment Scores**

In this section, the overall program assessment scores are analyzed with the same scoring categories used in the Report Card and Star Quality Program (described in the previous section).

# **Distribution of Overall Program Assessment Scores**

Table 8 presents the distribution of overall program assessment scores for child care centers and family/group homes separately.

It is worth noting that centers had a higher proportion of agencies scoring 5.00 or above on *program assessment* than did family/group homes from Year 1 through Year 4, but family/group homes have had a slightly higher proportion of providers scoring 5.00 or above from Year 5 through Year 9. In Year 10, centers again had a higher proportion of agencies scoring 5.00 or above on *program assessment* than did family/group homes. The proportion for centers increased from Year 9 to Year 10 while the proportion for family/group homes decreased. (It is assumed that this decrease was influenced by the implementation of the FCCERS-R scale in Year 10.)

Table 8. The Distribution of Overall Program Assessment Scores for All Providers, Child Care Centers, and Family/Group Homes, Years 1–10

All providers	3.99 or	below	4.00-	-4.49	4.50-	-4.99	5.00 or	above	TOTAL*
providers	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Year 1	1,088	32.1	678	20.0	635	18.7	990	29.2	3,391
Year 2	739	21.9	563	16.7	747	22.2	1,318	39.1	3,367
Year 3	731	22.0	665	20.0	781	23.5	1,149	34.5	3,326
Year 4	838	25.0	701	20.9	755	22.5	1,061	31.6	3,355
Year 5	894	27.3	680	20.8	731	22.4	965	29.5	3,270
Year 6	605	19.5	532	17.1	725	23.3	1,246	40.1	3,108
Year 7	549	17.7	510	16.4	616	19.9	1,428	46.0	3,103
Year 8	539	17.8	474	15.6	654	21.6	1,366	45.0	3,033
Year 9	467	15.6	452	15.1	663	22.2	1,403	47.0	2,985
Year 10	534	18.3	429	14.7	631	21.7	1,318	45.3	2,912
Child care	3.99 or	below	4.00-	-4.49	4.50-	-4.99	5.00 or	above	TOTAL*
centers	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Year 1	682	30.4	441	19.7	429	19.1	692	30.8	2,244
Year 2	434	19.2	384	17.0	540	23.9	900	39.9	2,258
Year 3	426	19.2	453	20.4	545	24.6	792	35.7	2,216
Year 4	523	24.1	422	19.5	492	22.7	732	33.7	2,169
Year 5	577	27.3	437	20.7	486	23.0	616	29.1	2,116
Year 6	389	18.8	359	17.4	505	24.4	816	39.4	2,069
Year 7	367	18.0	329	16.2	414	20.4	924	45.4	2,034
Year 8	350	17.5	294	14.7	459	23.0	897	44.9	2,000
Year 9	305	15.7	308	15.8	432	22.2	899	46.2	1,944
Year 10	258	13.4	260	13.5	452	23.5	955	49.6	1,925
Family/									
group	3.99 or	below	4.00	-4.49	4.50-	-4.99	5.00 or	above	TOTAL*
homes	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Year 1	406	35.4	237	20.7	206	18.0	298	26.0	1,147
Year 2	305	27.5	179	16.1	207	18.7	418	37.7	1,109
Year 3	305	27.5	212	19.1	236	21.3	357	32.2	1,110
Year 4	315	26.6	279	23.5	263	22.2	329	27.7	1,186
Year 5	317	27.5	243	21.1	245	21.2	349	30.2	1,154
Year 6	216	20.8	173	16.7	220	21.2	430	41.4	1,039
Year 7	182	17.0	181	16.9	202	18.9	504	47.1	1,069
Year 8	189	18.3	180	17.4	195	18.9	469	45.4	1,033
Year 9	162	15.6	144	13.8	231	22.2	504	48.4	1,041
Year 10	276	28.0	169	17.1	179	18.1	363	36.8	987

<sup>\*</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 percent due to rounding.

The distributions for Years 1, 5, 9, and 10 for all providers displayed above in Table 8 are presented graphically in Figure 7. The distributions for child care centers and family/group homes are presented in Figures 8 and 9.

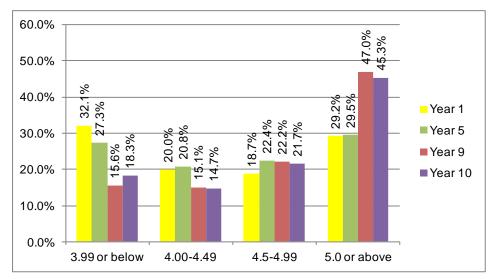


Figure 7. Distribution of Overall Program Assessment Scores for All Providers for Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

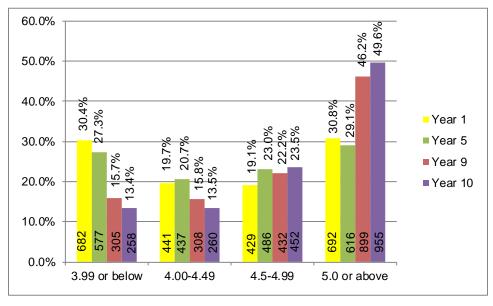


Figure 8. Distribution of Overall Program Assessment Scores for All Evaluated Child Care Centers for Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

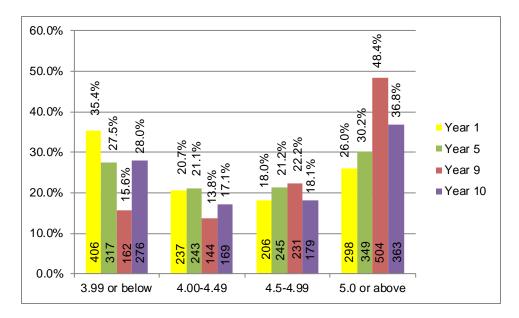


Figure 9. Distribution of Overall Program Assessment Scores for All Evaluated Family and Group Homes for Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

# **Average Program Assessment Scores**

In order to assess the movement in scores across the state, an average overall program assessment score was calculated for all evaluated agencies and the two subgroups (see Table 9).

Table 9. Average Program Assessment Scores for All Evaluated Agencies\*

	All evaluate	ed agencies	Child Car	e Centers	Family and G	Group Homes
	#	Mean	#	Mean	#	Mean
Year 1	3,391	4.37	2,244	4.38	1,147	4.35
Year 2	3,367	4.67	2,258	4.69	1,109	4.63
Year 3	3,326	4.61	2,216	4.64	1,110	4.55
Year 4	3,355	4.52	2,169	4.54	1,186	4.49
Year 5	3,270	4.46	2,116	4.44	1,154	4.51
Year 6	3,108	4.71	2,069	4.69	1,039	4.75
Year 7	3,103	4.78	2,034	4.75	1,069	4.83
Year 8	3,033	4.80	2,000	4.78	1,033	4.85
Year 9	2,985	4.86	1,944	4.82	1,041	4.93
Year 10	2,912	4.81	1,925	4.94	987	4.56

<sup>\*</sup>A score of 1 is considered to be "inadequate" care; 3 is "minimal" care; 4 is "average" care; 5 is "good" care; and 7 is "excellent" care. Scores of 2 and 6 are not explicitly defined in the scales.

# **Statistical Analysis**

• A statistical test (t-test) was applied to the differences between average overall program assessment scores to determine whether the differences from Year 1 to Year 10 and from Year 9 to Year 10 were statistically significant. This is a test to determine if the change in scores between the years being compared is a result of normal variation or if it represents real change. Analysis was conducted for child care centers alone as the introduction of the FCCERS-R in Year 10 made it inappropriate to compare earlier results for family/group homes to those of Year 10.

# Year 1 and Year 10—Grouped-score analysis for Child Care Centers

• The change in overall program assessment mean scores for **child care centers** (from 4.38 to 4.94) is statistically significant (p = .0001), indicating a real and substantial increase.

# Year 9 and Year 10—Grouped-score analysis for Child Care Centers

• The change in overall program assessment mean scores for **child care centers** (from 4.82 to 4.94) is statistically significant (p = .0002), indicating a real and substantial increase.

# Movement in provider scores in Year 10

A comparison of the movement in *program assessment* component scores between Years 9 and 10 (see Table 10) to the movement in scores between Years 8 and 9 (see Table 11) resulted in the following:

- The change from Year 9 to Year 10 showed a larger proportion of **child care centers** with no movement in *program assessment* component scores and a smaller proportion with a negative movement in scores, when compared to the change of scores between Years 8 and 9.
- For family/group homes, the differences between the movement in Years 9 and 10 and the movement in Years 8 and 9 are marked. Fewer providers maintained their program assessment star level while many experienced negative movement. This can be attributed to the introduction of the FCCERS-R in Year 10. A negative movement also occurred with the introduction of ITERS-R in Year 5,as providers adjusted to a more rigorous scale.

Table 10. Movement in Overall Program Assessment Scores for Paired Agencies from Year 9 to Year 10

All paired agencies	Increased 1, 2, or 3 levels		Kept the s	ame score	Decreased 1, 2, or 3 levels		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Child care centers	447 <sup>1</sup>	25.1	1,005	56.4	331 <sup>2</sup>	18.6	
Family and group homes	163 <sup>3</sup>	18.2	376	42.0	356 <sup>4</sup>	39.8	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Of these, 323 (72.3%) increased 1 level, 98 (21.9%) increased 2 levels, and 26 (5.8%) increased 3 levels.

Table 11. Movement in Overall Program Assessment Scores for Paired Agencies from Year 8 to Year 916

All paired agencies	Increased 1, 2, or 3 levels		Kept the s	ame score	Decreased 1, 2, or 3 levels		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Child care centers	454	25.2	970	53.8	379	21.0	
Family and group homes	245	27.5	462	51.9	184	20.7	

# Classroom/Home Observation Scores

The observation score is the score obtained when an assessor uses one of the four Environment Rating Scales (ITERS-R, ECERS-R, SACERS, or FCCERS-R) to assess a classroom or family/group home. In the case of a family or group home, only one observation is made and one observation score is recorded. For a child care center, the number of observations depends upon the size of the center and the number of classrooms for each age group where at least 25% of all classrooms are observed. The overall score is based on the average of the classroom observation scores unless the program has a classroom with a score of 2.99 or lower. In that case, the lowest classroom score is used as the *overall program assessment* score. If a classroom scores below 3.00, that classroom is considered to be providing inadequate child care. The rationale is that parents should be made aware of this situation when it occurs, and they would not be if an inadequate classroom score were obscured in an average of all classroom scores. The assessor scores each of the items on a scale from 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest score. The item scores are then averaged to determine the classroom observation score, which also ranges from 1 to 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Of these, 256 (77.3%) decreased 1 level, 54 (16.3%) decreased 2 levels, and 21 (6.3%) decreased 3 levels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Of these, 113 (69.3%) increased 1 level, 33 (20.2%) increased 2 levels, and 17 (10.4%) increased 3 levels.

 $<sup>^{4}</sup>$ Of these, 182 (51.1%) decreased 1 level, 126 (35.4%) decreased 2 levels, and 48 (13.5) decreased 3 levels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Table 11 was taken from the Year 9 Report using a data extract retrieved in January 2011. Totals reflect data available at that time. See Graves & Magda (2011) for further explanation of data extract.

# **Number of Assessments by Scale**

The total number of classroom/home assessments has decreased each year, with an overall decrease of 867 observations from Year 1 to Year 10 (see Table 12). The largest decreases have occurred in the SACERS (-374) and ECERS-R (-245) assessments. The number of observations in these two classrooms settings has declined steadily over the years, while the number of FDCRS/FCCERS-R and ITERS/ITERS-R observations has vacillated. Between the close of Year 9 and the close of Year 10, the number of observations for all classroom settings decreased.

# **Average Observation Scores**

The average observation score for each of the four scales for each of the 10 program years is presented in Table 12. The following are noteworthy observations:

- For the first time, average classroom scores for the **ECERS-R** and the **SACERS** moved above 5.0 in Year 10.
- For the first 9 years ITERS-R held the lowest average score among the scales with FCCERS-R taking its place in Year 10.
- SACERS had the highest average score between Years 1 and 7 and again in Year 9.
- Though the average scores were very similar to those of **SACERS**, **ECERS-R** held the highest average score in Years 8 and 10.
- Beginning in Year 8, ECERS-R and SACERS have had similar average scores.
- In Year 10, average observation scores increased for the ITERS-R, ECCERS-R, and SACERS but not for the FCCERS-R.

Table 12. Number of Assessments and Average Classroom/Home Observation Scores for All Evaluated Agencies\*

	(ITERS)/	ITERS-R	ECE	RS-R	SAC	ERS	(FDCRS)/F	CCERS-R**
	#	Mean	#	Mean	#	Mean	#	Mean
Year 1	(1,378)	(3.94)	2,161	4.51	1,188	4.69	(1,149)	4.36
Year 2	(1,390)	(4.30)	2,173	4.79	1,153	4.88	(1,113)	4.62
Year 3	(1,369)	(4.20)	2,140	4.77	1,125	4.80	(1,108)	4.55
Year 4	(1,374)	(4.18)	2,096	4.65	1,069	4.69	(1,176)	4.48
Year 5	1,333	3.99	2,012	4.59	1,032	4.71	(1,145)	4.50
Year 6	1,340	4.31	2,006	4.80	954	4.86	(1,031)	4.75
Year 7	1,318	4.39	1,979	4.84	913	4.93	(1,064)	4.83
Year 8	1,300	4.48	1,938	4.89	882	4.86	(1,028)	4.85
Year 9	1,320	4.55	1,933	4.91	835	4.95	(1,035)	4.93
Year 10	1,292	4.67	1,916	5.02	814	5.01	987	4.56
Change Yrs. 9-10***	-28		-17		-21		-48	
Change Yrs. 1-10****	-86		-245		-374		-162	

Note: ITERS-R was implemented in Year 5. FCCERS-R was implemented in Year 10.

# **Statistical Analysis**

A *t*-test was applied to the average classroom/home observation scores to determine whether the differences in average scores were statistically significant. This test determines if the change in scores was a result of normal variation or if this represents a real change. The results were as follows:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>A score of 1 is considered to be "inadequate" care; 3 is "minimal" care; 4 is "average" care; 5 is "good" care; and 7 is "excellent" care.

<sup>\*\*</sup>FDCRS/FCCERS-R data derived from the observation-level database; numbers vary slightly from the provider-level database.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Total change for all observations between Year 9 and Year 10 was -114.

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>Total change for all observations between Year 1 and Year 10 was -867.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The statistical test for observation scores is administered to "grouped scores." This test cannot be administered on "paired scores" at the observation level for centers, because classrooms are selected for assessment on a random basis; thus, the classrooms cannot be "paired" from one year to the next.

# Year 1 and Year 10

• The changes in average observation scores for ECERS-R and SACERS are statistically significant (*p* = .0001), indicating a real increase in scores. ITERS and ITERS-R and FDCRS and FCCERS-R cannot be compared. <sup>18</sup>

#### Year 9 and Year 10

- The change in average observation scores for the ITERS-R and ECERS-R is statistically significant (p = .0011 and p = .0002, respectively), indicating a real increase in scores for these scales.
- There was no significant difference in scores for SACERS, indicating no real change in scores.
- FDCRS and FCCERS-R cannot be compared.

# **Distribution of Classroom/Home Observation Scores**

The distributions of observation scores for each of the scales are presented in two ways: (1) by star-rating categories and (2) by unit scores 1–7.

### Distribution by star-rating categories

# Family/Group Homes (FDCRS/FCCERS-R)

As a result of implementing the FCCERS-R scale in Year 10, program assessment scores decreased from Year 9. As Figure 10 below indicates, Year 10 registered a decrease in the proportion of **family/group homes** earning either a 3-star or 2-star rating and an increase in the proportion earning 0-star or 1-star ratings. Steady improvement is anticipated in the coming years as demonstrated by the improvement of FDCRS scores over the first 9 program years.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> The ITERS-R (a revised version of the ITERS) was implemented in Tennessee in Year 5. In previous years, the ITERS was the infant-toddler assessment instrument that was used. The FCCERS-R (a revised version of the FDCRS was implemented in Tennessee in Year 10. In previous years, the FDCRS was the family/group home assessment instrument that was used.

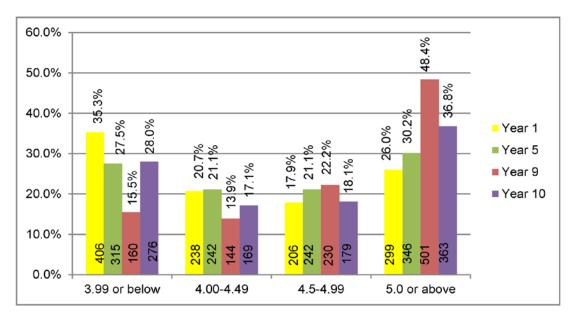


Figure 10. Distribution of FDCRS/FCCERS-R\* Scores, Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

# Infant-Toddler Classrooms (ITERS-R)

As seen in Figure 11, in Year 10, observation scores continued to improve, with the most recent distribution registering the lowest proportion in the 0-star category and the highest proportion in both the 2-star and the 3-star categories of any years since the beginning of the program.

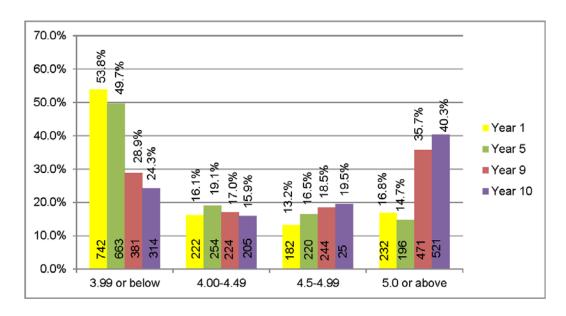


Figure 11. Distribution of ITERS/ITERS-R\* Scores, Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

# **Preschool Classrooms (ECERS-R)**

The proportion of **preschool classrooms** that scored in the 0-star category has decreased, and the proportion scoring in the 3-star category (5.0 or above) increased in Year 10 (see Figure 12).

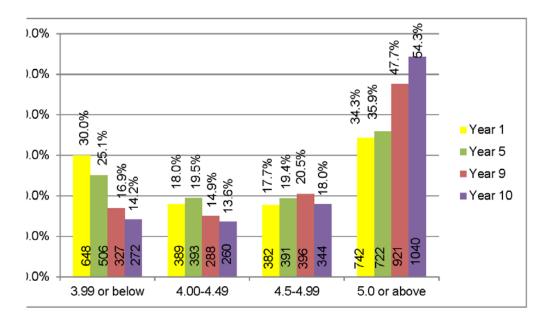


Figure 12. Distribution of ECERS-R Scores, Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

# **School-age Classrooms (SACERS)**

The distribution of **SACERS** scores (see Figure 13) over the years is similar to that of **ITERS-R** scores shown in Figure 11, where in Year 10, observation scores continued to improve, with the most recent distribution registering the lowest proportion in the 0-star category and the highest proportion in both the 2-star and the 3-star categories of any year since the beginning of the program. The **school-age classrooms**, assessed using the **SACERS** scale, are typically the highest-scoring classroom type.

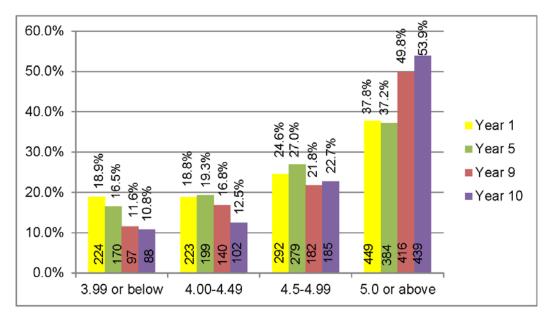


Figure 13. Distribution of SACERS Scores, Year 1, 5, 9, and 10

# Distribution of classroom/home observation scores on a scale of 1 to 7

The authors of the Environment Rating Scales have advised using the categories of 1–7 when studying the distribution of scores over time. This set of distributions allows a judgment to be made about what is happening to scores at the two ends of the scale and allows a visual perception of the shifts across time. Using this scale, a score of 1.0–2.9 is considered "poor" quality; a score of 5.0–7.0 is "good to excellent"; and scores of 3.0–4.9 are "fair." Figures 14–17 present the *program assessment* results for Tennessee using a scale of 1 to 7.

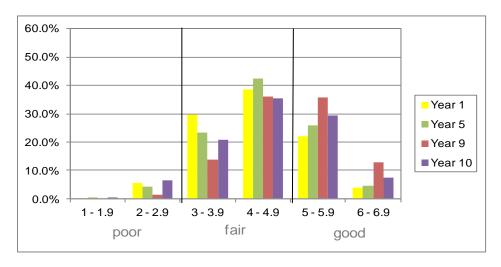


Figure 14. Distribution of FDCRS/FCCERS-R\* Using Scale 1-7, Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

Note: FCCERS-R was implemented in Year 10. The resulting reduction in program assessment scores was anticipated.

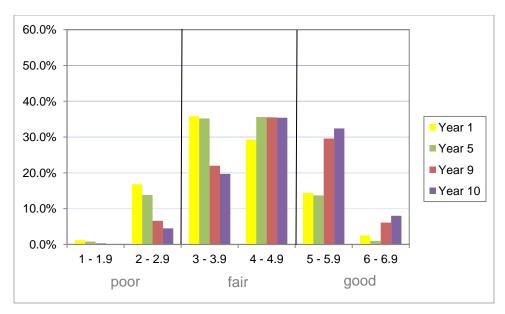


Figure 15. Distribution of ITERS/ITERS-R\* Scores Using Scale 1-7, Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

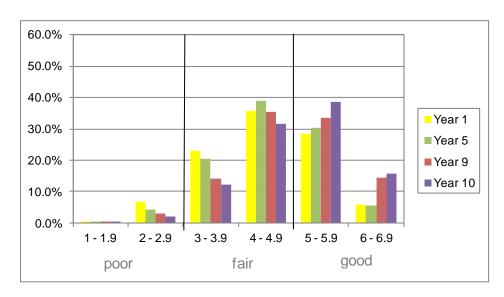


Figure 16. Distribution of ECERS-R Scores Using Scale 1-7, Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

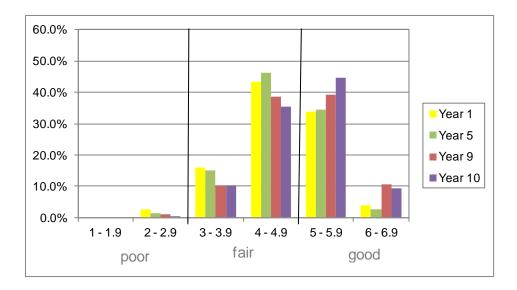


Figure 17. Distribution of SACERS Scores Using Scale 1-7, Years 1, 5, 9, and 10

# **Analysis of Reliability Data**

The number of assessors who were deemed "not reliable" (based on an average of their last three checks) was low for both Year 8 and Year 9. There appear to be no notable differences in the reliability data for the 2 years, other than (1) a slight decrease in the total number of reliability checks in Year 9 for SACERS and FDCRS (with no decrease in the number of assessors checked), and (2) a slight increase in the number of "not-reliable" checks (though without an increase in "not-reliable" assessors).

The total number of observations (n = 5,017) and total number of reliability checks (n = 549) conducted during Year 10 were very close to the number in Year 9. Of the 549 reliability checks conducted, 39 (less than 8%) resulted in "not reliable" results. It appears that this is a function of staff learning a revised instrument, FCCERS-R, in Year 10 and also an increase in ECERS-R "not reliable" checks.

# **Analysis of Caregiver Characteristics**

Included in the assessment process is the collection of information about a variety of caregiver characteristics that are thought to enhance the quality of the classroom or home environment and, thus, the child's experience in care. Included below is a discussion of these data and the findings of statistical analysis.

### **Child-Staff Ratios and Classroom Assessment Score**

The relationship between the child-staff ratio of the classroom and the child care center's classroom assessment score was explored. The average scores for the various ratios are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Average Classroom Assessment Scores by Child-Staff Ratio for Infant-Toddler, Preschool, and School-Age Classrooms for Year 10

	1						
Child-staff ratio (# children / # staff) *	n	mean					
Infant-toddler classrooms (ITERS-R)							
1–2	501	4.85					
3–4	627	4.63					
5 or over	164	4.30					
Preschool classrooms (ECERS-R)							
1–5	1,010	5.07					
6–7	493	5.07					
8 or over	413	4.82					
School-age classrooms (SACERS)							
1–5	217	5.09					
6–8	231	5.21					
9–10	131	4.91					
11–14	142	4.87					
15 or over	93	4.66					

The child—staff ratio was created by dividing the number of children present by the number of staff present on the day of the assessment. Ratios (# children/# staff) were reported as whole numbers, rounding up for any and all fractions.

# Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted on the various ratio subgroups for each classroom type (by pairing individual subgroups with each other), showing that the staff-child ratio affects quality. Specific observations are as follows:

- For infant-toddler classrooms, the average observation scores for the subgroup of classrooms with a lower child-staff ratio was always significantly higher than the averages of any other classroom subgroups with a higher staff-child ratio.
- For **preschool classrooms**, the average observation scores for the subgroup of classrooms with a lower child-staff ratio was always significantly higher than the averages of any other classroom subgroup with a higher staff-child ratio EXCEPT when comparing the average scores of the subgroups with the staff-child ratio of 1–5 with 6–7.

• The average scores for **school-age classrooms** differed significantly when comparing the subgroup with a ratio of 6-8 with other classroom groups with a higher ratio. As one would expect, there was a difference between the average score of the subgroup of classrooms with a 1–5 ratio when compared to the subgroup of classrooms with a 15 and over ratio.

# Caregiver Experience and Classroom and Home Assessment Score

The relationship between the caregiver's years of experience in the child care field and the observation score was calculated for each classroom type and for family/group homes. The findings from this analysis showed that although all correlations are statistically significant, indicating that the caregivers with more experience had higher observation scores, they are not of practical significance. The correlation coefficients indicate that a very small percentage of the variation in observation scores is explained by caregiver's experience. For example, the experience of caregivers in preschool classrooms explains 4% of the variation in observation scores.

# Caregiver Highest Level of Education and Professional Training in Early Childhood Education (ECE)

The highest educational attainment for assessed caregivers is presented in Table 14, which shows that the majority of caregivers completed a high school degree, a GED, or some college work.

Table 14. Highest Level of Education for Assessed Caregivers in Year 10

n = 5,117	,	toddler 1,292		chool 1,915		School-age n = 814		y/group me 987
Highest level of education	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Did not complete high school	10	0.8	1	0.1	2	0.2	18	1.8
High school diploma/GED	475	36.8	394	20.6	150	18.4	257	26.0
Some college coursework	518	40.1	669	34.9	367	45.1	430	43.6
2-year AA or AAS degree	110	8.5	305	15.9	64	7.9	113	11.4
4-year BA or BS degree	111	8.6	313	16.3	121	14.9	59	6.0
Some graduate coursework	12	0.9	56	2.6	22	2.7	14	1.4
Graduate degree	17	1.3	87	4.5	27	3.3	26	2.6
Declined to answer	39	3.0	90	4.7	61	7.5	70	7.1

# Statistical Analysis

The result of the statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between caregiver education and observation score in all classroom settings and family/group homes. However, further analysis indicated that they do not show a practical significance with this population of caregivers. A very small percentage of the variation in observation scores is explained by caregiver's education. For example, education of the caregiver in preschool classrooms explains only 7% of the variation in observation scores. A combination of other variables accounts for the other 93% of this variation.

# Caregiver Professional Training in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Classroom and Home Assessment Score

A more in-depth review of the educational credentials of caregivers is displayed in Table 15. It includes data on the professional training obtained by caregivers assessed in Year 10. The following observations can be made:

- The majority of caregivers who were assessed in Year 10 do not have professional training in early childhood education or child development across all child care settings.
- Over one fifth of the caregivers in family/group homes had earned a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- Fewer than 25% of the caregivers in **infant-toddler** classrooms reported having any ECE or professional training.

Table 15. Professional Training in Early Childhood Education (ECE) for Assessed Caregivers in Year 10

	Infant-toddler n = 1,292			Preschool n = 1,915		ol-age 814	Family/ group home n = 987	
Early Childhood Education (ECE) Professional Training <sup>†</sup>	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
None	973	75.3	1,098	57.3	565	69.4	669	64.7
CDA credential	192	14.9	358	18.7	120	14.7	232	22.4
2-year degree in ECE or Child Development	33	2.6	185	9.7	21	2.6	44	4.3
4-year degree in ECE or Child Development	57	4.4	221	11.5	39	4.8	18	1.7
Graduate degree in ECE or Child Development	9	0.7	51	2.7	15	1.8	7	0.7
Declined to answer	38	2.9	86	4.5	61	7.5	91	8.8

<sup>†</sup>Note: Instructions were to check all that apply; therefore, the sample size listed is higher than that in Table 14, and the percentages reflect the percent of the total caregivers in that classroom type or home with that level of training. Columns do not total 100%.

# Attainment of a CDA credential and classroom/home scores

To investigate the value of a CDA credential, the average observation score for the subgroup of caregivers with a CDA credential was compared to the average observation score for the subgroup of caregivers without any formal early childhood or child development education within each of the classroom/home types (infant-toddler, preschool, school-age classrooms, and family/group homes). The average observation scores are included in Table 16.

Table 16. Average Classroom Assessment Scores by Attainment of a CDA credential

	With CDA	Without CDA
Classroom/Home Type*	Mean	Mean
Infant-toddler classrooms (ITERS-R) (n = 1,157)	5.04	4.56
Preschool classrooms (ECERS-R) (n = 1,382)	5.22	4.79
School-age classrooms (SACERS) (n = 681)	5.26	4.93
Family/group homes (FCCERS-R) (n = 839)	4.74	4.48
Total (n = 4,059)		

<sup>\*</sup>All comparisons are significant at p = .001.

# Statistical Analysis

The results of the statistical analysis indicate that there is a significant difference (p = .001) in the average classroom observation scores for those **caregivers who hold a CDA credential** and the average classroom observation for those who do not across **all classroom settings**.

#### **Utilization of TECTA services**

In Year 10, family/group home providers and teachers in classrooms selected for assessment were asked about their use of Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) services. Table 17 presents the frequencies of those responding affirmatively to a question about using TECTA services within the last 12 months by classroom/home type. The proportion of caregivers utilizing TECTA services is much higher in family/group homes than in the center classrooms.

Table 17. Assessed Caregivers' Report of Utilization of TECTA Services in Previous 12-Month Period

Classroom/Home Type	n	%
Infant-toddler classrooms (ITERS-R) ( $n = 1,249$ )	502	40.2
Preschool classrooms (ECERS-R) (n = 1,817)	614	33.8
School-age classrooms (SACERS) (n = 746)	220	29.5
Family/group homes (FCCERS-R) (n = 920)	459	49.9
Total (n = 4,732)	1,795	37.9

Caregivers were asked two additional questions about TECTA:

- If they had at any time completed TECTA-funded college courses and
- If they had at any time completed TECTA Orientation, the 30-hour orientation session designed and led by TECTA staff. If the answer to the latter question was

affirmative, they were asked to check the specialization(s) of the orientation classes that they completed.

These results are displayed in Tables 18 and 19.

Table 18. Type of TECTA Service Utilized by Assessed Caregivers at Any Time†

	classr	toddler cooms 249*	oms classrooms		classi	ol-age cooms 746*	Family/group homes n = 920*		
TECTA Services	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Completed TECTA- funded college courses	162	13.1	311	17.1	105	14.1	266	28.9	
Completed TECTA Orientation	674	54.0	885	48.7	391	52.4	711	77.3	

<sup>\* &#</sup>x27;n' depicts number responding to question. Percentages based on number of caregivers responding to this question; it does not include missing data (i.e., no response was recorded).

Table 19. Type of TECTA Orientation Completed by Assessed Caregivers at Any Time†

Classroom/Home Type	Administrator		Center	Center-based		Family Child Care		Infant-toddler		School-age	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Infant-toddler classrooms $n = 674*$	57	8.5	187	27.2	17	2.5	519	77.0	26	3.9	
Preschool classrooms n = 884*	162	18.3	675	76.4	28	3.2	191	21.6	51	5.6	
School-age classrooms n = 391*	135	34.5	150	38.4	12	3.1	61	15.6	211	54.0	
Family/group homes $n = 709*$	238	33.6	151	21.3	543	76.6	180	25.4	89	12.6	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup>Assessors were asked to check all the responses that apply. For that reason, the percentages of responses in each row do not total 100%.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup>Assessors were asked to check all the responses that apply. For that reason, the percentages of responses in each row do not total 100%.

<sup>\*&#</sup>x27;n' depicts number reporting completion of TECTA Orientation; percentages based on this number.

# TECTA Orientation and classroom/home scores

To assess the impact of TECTA Orientation on the observation scores, a comparison of the average observation score for the subgroup of caregivers who reported completing TECTA Orientation was compared to the average observation score for the subgroup of caregivers who did not complete orientation. The mean observations scores are included in Table 20.

Table 20. Average Classroom Assessment Scores by Completion of TECTA Orientation

	Completing Orientation Mean	Without Completing Orientation Mean**
Infant-toddler classrooms (ITERS-R) (n = 1,249)	4.76*	4.56
Preschool classrooms (ECERS-R) (n = 1,816)	5.01	5.02
School-age classrooms (SACERS) (n = 755)	5.09*	4.92
Family/group homes (FDCRS) (n = 920)	4.70*	4.20
Total (n = 4,740)		

<sup>\*</sup>statistically significant (p < .005)

# Statistical Analysis

A statistical test was conducted to determine the effect of utilization of TECTA services on observation scores. The finding of the statistical test was the following:

For those caregivers who had completed TECTA Orientation, the average classroom/home observation was significantly higher than those caregivers who had not completed orientation in **infant-toddler** classrooms (p = .0002), **school-age** classrooms (p = .0026), and **family/group** homes (p = .0001). There was no significant difference in the average scores in **preschool** classrooms for caregivers who had and who had not completed TECTA Orientation.

### CCR&R training and classroom/home scores

Assessed caregivers were asked if they had utilized services provided by the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network **within the last 12 months**. If the answer was affirmative, they were asked to check all the options that applied (i.e., "on-site consultation or technical assistance," "training sponsored by CCR&R," "checked out resources from the

<sup>\*\*</sup>This subgroup includes caregivers who never attempted orientation and those who did not complete orientation.

lending library," and "visit to CCR&R.") The number and percent reporting participation in these trainings are presented in Table 21.

The vast majority of caregivers indicated that they utilized CCR&R services within the last 12 months. These caregivers were most likely to attend a CCR&R sponsored training event or receive on-site targeted technical assistance.

Table 21. Assessed Caregivers' Report of Utilization of CCR&R Services in Previous 12-Month Period†\*

	Info todo classr (ITEF	dler ooms	Presc classr (ECEI	ooms	classi	ol-age rooms CERS)	ho	ı/group mes CRS)	тот	TAL .
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Has caregiver utilized services provided by CCR&R within the last 12 months?	n = 1,	254*	n = 1,	830*	n = -	758*	n =	922*	n = 4,	764*
Yes	1,037	82.7	1,465	80.1	593	78.2	871	94.5	3,966	83.2
If yes, check all that apply. †	n = 1,	037*	n = 1,	463*	n = !	593*	n =	871*	n = 3,	964*
Training sponsored by CCR&R	933	90.0	1,293	88.4	528	89.0	782	89.8	3,563	89.2
On-site consultation or technical assistance	703	67.8	987	67.5	391	65.9	765	87.8	2,846	71.8
Lending library	234	22.6	403	27.5	168	28.3	533	61.2	1,338	33.8
Visit to CCR&R	195	18.8	296	20.2	150	25.3	288	33.1	929	23.4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup>Assessors were asked to check all the responses that apply. For that reason, the percentages of responses in each column do not total 100%.

<sup>\*&#</sup>x27;n' represents number responding to question. Percentages based on number of caregivers responding to this question; it does not include missing data (i.e., no response was recorded).

# Relationship between CCR&R Targeted Technical Assistance and program assessment score

Table 22. Average Classroom Score for Assessed Caregivers' Report of Utilization of CCR&R Targeted Technical Assistance in Previous 12-Month Period\*

	class	-toddler rooms RS-R)	class	school srooms ERS-R)	class	ol-age rooms CERS)	ho	ly/group omes CERS-R)
	#	Mean	#	Mean	#	Mean	#	Mean
Yes	703	4.81	987	5.12	391	5.18	765	4.67
No	334	4.63	476	4.93	202	4.92	106	4.28

<sup>\*</sup>All comparisons were statistically significant at  $p \le .05$ .

### Statistical Analysis

An analysis to determine the impact of CCR&R Targeted Technical Assistance on *program* assessment scores showed that across all classroom types, the average observation score for the caregivers who received on-site consultation or technical assistance was significantly higher than the average scores for the sub-group of caregivers who did not receive these services.

#### **Utilization of TFCCA and TOPSTAR services**

In Year 10, family/group home providers who were assessed were asked about their use of Tennessee Family Child Care Alliance's (TFCCA) and Tennessee's Outstanding Providers Supported Through Available Resources (TOPSTAR) peer mentoring program services. Tables 23 and 24 present the frequencies of those responding affirmatively to a question about using these services within the last 12 months by classroom/home type.

Almost one third of family/group home providers who were assessed noted that they had utilized services provided by TFCCA and TOPSTAR. Of those who indicated they type of service used, more than two thirds said they participated in peer support groups and/or attended the annual conference.

Caregivers were asked a follow-up questions about TOPSTAR participation where they could check all response choices that applied. As a result, 151 (54.8%) responded that they had either been a protégé in the past or were currently a protégé. Caregivers also disclosed their mentor status. One hundred thirteen (39.0%) indicated that they had either been a mentor in the past and/or were currently a mentor in Year 10.

Table 23. Assessed Caregivers' Report of Utilization of TFCCA and TOPSTAR Services in Previous 12-Month Period

Has caregiver utilized services provided by TFCCA or TOPSTAR within the last 12 months? (n = 917)	n	%	Mean
Yes	290	31.6	4.93*
No	627	68.4	4.43*

<sup>\*</sup>The difference was statistically significant ( $p \le .05$ )

Table 24. Assessed Caregivers' Report of Utilization of TFCCA and TOPSTAR Services in Previous 12-Month Period

	n	%
Has caregiver utilized services provided by TFCCA or TOPSTAR within the last 12 months? ( $n = 917$ )	290	31.6
If yes, check all that apply.*	(n = 164)	
Participated in TFCCA/TOPSTAR peer support group	116	70.7
Participated in on-site consultation or technical assistance by a TOPSTAR mentor	111	67.7
Participated in TFCCA/TOPSTAR conference	103	62.8
Participated in a Leadership Summit	6	3.7

<sup>\*</sup>Assessors were asked to check all the responses that apply. For that reason, the percentages of responses in each column do not total 100%.

# Statistical Analysis

When the average observation scores were compared for the subgroup of family/group home caregivers who utilized services provided by TFCCA or TOPSTAR with those caregivers who did not, the difference was statistically significant.

# Relationship between Accreditation and Program Assessment Score

DHS awards 2 bonus points to those agencies that have earned accreditation from DHS-recognized national organizations (e.g., NACECPP, NAEYC, NAFCC, SACS). These bonus points are added to the sum of component scores before the calculation of the report card starrating and do not impact the program assessment score. Data are included in Table 23.

Table 25. Average Program Assessment Scores for Providers by With and Without Accreditation for Year 10

	All providers			
	<b>n</b> Mear			
Programs with accreditation	133	5.42		
Programs without accreditation	2,562	4.80		

The results of the statistical analysis show that for **all providers**, the average *program* assessment score for programs that are accredited is significantly higher (p = .0001) than the average score for those facilities that are not accredited.

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# **Conclusions**

Year 10 marked a continuation of progress in quality of child care in Tennessee, as measured by the Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program, indicating that more children in Tennessee are receiving high-quality care.

The last few years have recorded the highest proportion of 3-star agencies (62.9% in both Year 9 and Year 10) since the STARS program began. There was very little change in the last 2 years in average overall report card scores. Approximately three fourths of both centers and family/group homes, of which 78.3 % were 3-star agencies, kept the same star-rating from Year 9 to Year 10.

In Year 10, the FCCERS-R was introduced to measure the program assessment component for family/group home providers, replacing the FDCRS (used from Year 1 through Year 9). The FCCERS-R is considered to be a much more rigorous scale than the FDCRS as the requirements of the FCCERS-R align more closely with those of the ECERS-R and ITERS-R scales. As a result of this change, the average *program assessment* score for family/group home providers in Year 10 was lower than the average scores for Years 6–9. This drop in average score mirrors the experience of center providers when the ITERS-R was introduced in Year 5. Average scores dropped that year but increased in subsequent years. Despite the challenges of a new assessment scale, over 60% of family/home providers maintained the same or increased their star-rating from Year 9 to Year 10.

Continuing on the path to improved quality as measured by the ERS, over three quarters of centers either kept the same, or increased, their program assessment star-rating in Year 10. The Year 10 average program assessment score (4.94) for centers was the highest since the inception of the Report Card Program. The Year 10 average scores for the preschool and afterschool classrooms (as measured by the ECERS-R and the SACERS) were above 5.0 for the first time in program history. This is another demonstration of the commitment of providers and the support provided to them to be successful.

When looking at the relationship between caregiver and classroom characteristics and quality, as measured by the Environment Rating Scales, several themes emerge:

- Classrooms with lower staff/child ratios exhibit higher quality.
- As a group, caregivers who hold a CDA credential demonstrate higher quality than those caregivers who do not have any early childhood education.
- Completing TECTA Orientation leads to higher quality care.
- Participating in CCR&R training and on-site Targeted Technical Assistance results in higher quality.
- TFCCA and TOPSTAR participation improves quality.
- Holding accreditation by an independent body is associated with higher quality care.

There has been a dramatic increase in the overall quality in child care settings across the state of Tennessee. The early childhood literature indicates that when a child spends her day in a high-quality child care environment, she is more likely to be ready for school and, later in life, better prepared to join the adult workforce.

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TENNESSEE REPORT CARD AND	

Appendix

**Report Card Components** 

# Report Card Components<sup>19</sup>

#### **Child Care Centers**

**Director qualifications**—This component provides the parent or other consumer with information about the education and experience of the center's director. This is important because the director plans the program and trains and supervises staff, thus establishing the quality of the program.

**Professional development**—This component describes the education and experience of the caregivers. Caregivers who have more experience, education, and up-to-date training on developmentally appropriate child care are more likely to understand and address children's developmental needs and, therefore, better prepare them for the future.

**Parent/family involvement**—This component describes how the agency involves parents and other family members in the child care program. Children in programs that emphasize active partnerships with parents generally receive higher quality care.

**Ratio and group size**—This area relates how many adults supervise the children in care at the facility and how many children are in each group. When ratios and group sizes are smaller, each child receives more individualized attention and supervision.

**Staff compensation**—This component provides information on the center's pay scale and benefits. It describes the extent to which all staff are included in a defined pay scale and whether the scale for teachers is related to their experience, education, and training. Staff turnover is stressful for young children, and caregivers who receive better pay and benefits are more likely to remain with the agency. However, this component on the report card does not measure how well staff is paid. Thus, a higher star-rating does not mean higher than average rates of compensation.

**Program assessment**—The program assessment is a 3–4 hour on-site observation of the child care agency in which the agency is rated on the quality of care being provided. This rating gives parents and other readers a good overall view of the program's quality.

**Developmental learning**—This component applies to the participation by staff in training on the Tennessee Early Developmental Standards (for programs serving children from zero to 60 months of age) and the School-Age Developmental Standards (for programs serving children over 60 months of age).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> In Years 1–7, child care centers were evaluated on seven components, and family and group homes were evaluated on five components. In the middle of Year 8 (January 2009), the *compliance history* component was removed and transformed into a threshold item that is used to determine eligibility for stars. In January 2010 a new component, *developmental learning*, was added to both the child care center and family/group home report cards.

# **Family and Group Homes**

Parent/family involvement—Same as above

**Program assessment**—Same as above

**Professional development**—This component tells the reader more about the primary caregiver's education, experience, and training.

**Business management**—This component informs the reader about the agency's policies, philosophy, and business and financial management practices. Good business practices lead to more stable facilities with fewer turnovers and more longevity.

**Developmental learning**—Same as above