

Qualistar Early Learning



CONNECTING GREAT KIDS
with **GREAT CARE**

90% of our intellectual, emotional and social ability is formed **BY THE AGE OF 3**

95% of public investment in education occurs **AFTER THE AGE OF 5**

In 1950 only 1 in 10 mothers of children ages 0 to 5 worked outside the home.

Today more than 61% of Colorado children under the age of 6 live in a household where all available parents are in the labor force.

In fact, 2/3 of Colorado families rely on child care in order to work full-time.

Child care has become an essential service, just like elementary education, water or electricity.



With child care becoming an essential service it is more important than ever for that service to be of the highest quality.

The early years are our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity

Providing high quality early care and education isn't a simple task. Though most programs consistently strive to improve quality, many financial and economic burdens make it a tough road for even the most dedicated providers.

Colorado is achieving only 40% of nationally recognized early childhood education quality benchmarks.

- The average child care worker earns \$8.91/hr. (Children's Defense Fund, 3/05)
- In Colorado, child care centers have a staff turnover rate of up to 60%. All other U.S. industries have a 9.6% average turnover rate.
- Only 200 child care centers (out of 1,653) are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (www.naeyc.org)
- Only 19 family child care homes (out of 3,484) are accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care. (www.nafcc.org)
- Colorado kindergarten teachers report that at least 1/3 of our children come to school unprepared to learn.

Colorado is ranked 25th among states in the amount of resources directed to early learning.

TO DONATE call Qualistar Early Learning at 303.339.6800 or email us at development@qualistar.org

High Quality Care **Equals** Success for Colorado's Children

When children begin school behind, they stay behind. High quality early learning programs can help close this gap.

We know from 40 YEARS of research that children who receive high quality care:

- Are more likely to be ready to learn when they enter kindergarten
- Demonstrate greater social skills throughout their education
- Experience an overall higher success rate in school and are more likely to graduate
- Are more likely to attend college
- Are more likely to hold jobs as adults and are less likely to be on welfare
- Have a greater potential for higher earnings over their lifetime

High quality programs must have the human and financial resources necessary to meet the needs of children and their families.

They must be able to provide age-appropriate experiences for a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities in a safe and nurturing environment.

To achieve these standards, we must invest in Colorado's early childhood education system.

Quality must be the focus.



Investing in Quality

- For every \$1 spent on early learning programs now, more than \$12 will be saved later in costs for special education services, health care, incarceration, and welfare.
- School districts can save \$11,000 for each child that attends a quality program due to decreased special education and remediation costs.
- 80% of employers report that child care problems force employees to lose work time.
- The availability of good early learning programs is critical to the recruitment and retention of employees who are parents.

With the right funding, early learning programs can improve quality and increase school readiness through accountability, incentives, training, and resources.

Qualistar Early Learning is working with child care providers, parents, and Colorado communities to improve the quality of early learning programs.

Ratings, Resources, and Referrals

The Role of Qualistar Early Learning

The Qualistar Rating

Developed by 150 early childhood experts, the Qualistar Rating measures quality in all licensed early learning programs, both home and center-based, that serve children birth to kindergarten.

This 4-star rating system (with four being the highest) outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the program and provides a detailed action plan for continuous quality improvement.

Trained observers, who spend several hours in each program collect information on five different quality components.

These five components include: *Learning Environment, Family Partnerships, Training and Education, Adult-to-Child Ratios and Group Size, and Accreditation.*

The Early Learning Report

An early learning report is prepared for each program that participates in the Qualistar Rating. It provides detailed information about the quality of the programs many families are considering and serves as a critical tool for parents as they search for quality care for their child. Reports on many programs throughout Colorado can be found by visiting www.qualistar.org.



“One look at my children and their improved daily interaction with my teachers confirms that Qualistar Early Learning's intervention has made a significant difference in the lives of my children, my teachers and me.”

-Child Care Provider

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Ratings, Resources, and Referrals

The Role of Qualistar Early Learning

Quality Improvement Services

The philosophy of ongoing quality improvement has been embraced by many high quality early learning programs in Colorado and across the nation.

The process includes regular assessment of critical program areas and the development of a quality improvement plan that outlines opportunities and strategies for improvement, benchmarks for success, and overall outcome measures.

Through collaborative partnerships with other agencies and organizations, Qualistar Early Learning offers a range of quality improvement services including:

- Pre-licensing support
- Program coaching and consulting services that include:
 - Getting Ready for Ratings
 - Facility improvements
 - Health & safety training
 - Family partnership development
 - Staff development / management and leadership training
 - Curriculum development



T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

Colorado T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® is a unique scholarship program that works to increase the education levels of Colorado's child care professionals, reduce turnover in the child care field and increase child care wages.

Children benefit by receiving more consistent care and they are able to establish more relationships with providers who are committed to the field. Providers that participate in T.E.A.C.H. tend to have a better understanding of child development and are more sensitive to the needs of young children.

Training and Education

In addition to T.E.A.C.H., Qualistar Early Learning supports providers by promoting high quality training and education that is critical to their professional status. Qualistar maintains a training calendar on its website that lists professional development opportunities for child care providers, and classes and trainings for parents and families.

Medication Administration Training

All licensed child care providers in the state of Colorado are required to have training in medication administration.

Qualistar maintains a database that includes all medication administration instructors that offer the training to any licensed child care provider administering medication, and any child care providers or school staff that administer medications to children in programs licensed by the CDHS Division of Child Care. To date, more than 26,000 child care providers have been trained.

Ratings, Resources, and Referrals

The Role of Qualistar Early Learning

Child Care Resource and Referral Network Partners

Qualistar Early Learning is the child care resource and referral network for the state of Colorado. The network consists of 15 agencies throughout the state that assist parents, child care providers and their local communities.

Enabling parents to make informed choices.

Child Care Resource and Referral partners provide guidance by phone, through workshops, newsletters, and in person giving parents referrals to local child care providers, information on state licensing requirements, availability of child care subsidies, and other important information.

Referrals are free and can take place by phone, in person, or on the Internet.

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network annually provides more than 22,000 Colorado parents with detailed information about the child care available in their local community. By phone, or online, Colorado parents can access information about location, Qualistar Ratings, costs, hours of operation, care philosophies, and much more.

In July 2005, Qualistar launched a new 1-877-338-CARE(2273) phone line, which provides a direct, one-stop source for Colorado parents to reach their local Child Care Resource and Referral office.



Giving providers opportunities to succeed

By providing opportunities for continuous professional development, through support of Qualistar Rating System programs and by advocating on behalf of all child care providers and staff, Child Care Resource and Referral partners are improving the quality of care for children.

Qualistar's Child Care Resource and Referral partners meets a need that no one else does, providing the bridge between parents, providers, community leaders, and policy makers.

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies help families and communities ensure that their children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO Quality

Improved Quality Requires an Investment

Early Learning Fund

Qualistar Early Learning created the **Early Learning Fund** to help finance continuous quality improvement activities for early learning programs throughout Colorado.

Established in 2005, the Early Learning Fund is financed through a combination of private and public funding sources. Early Learning Fund grants, which are leveraged in local communities by a required 25% match, allow Qualistar to:

- Increase investments in early learning programs that are striving to improve quality;
- Provide accountability through the Qualistar Rating System; and
- Create a standardized framework for building high quality early learning programs across Colorado.



By supporting the Early Learning Fund, you can help early learning programs improve quality and ensure a better future for Colorado's children.

The Colorado Child Care Contribution Credit

As an incentive for contributions that promote child care, the State of Colorado offers a generous 50% tax credit to business and individuals who make a monetary donation in support of child care. Your cash contribution to Qualistar Early Learning will allow you to take advantage of a tax credit on your state tax bill equal to 50% of your donation.

EXAMPLE - \$5000 gift

	No contribution	\$5,000 gift to Qualistar
Total Income	\$100,000	\$100,000
Taxable Income	\$100,000	\$95,000
Federal Taxes	(\$35,000)	(\$33,250)
State Taxes	(\$4,630)	(\$4,399)
50% Tax Credit	-----	\$2,500
Total Taxes	(\$39,630)	(\$35,149)
After Tax Dollars	\$60,370	\$64,852

Summary of Rules and Limitations of the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit:

- Only monetary donations qualify.
- If taxpayer or related person have a financial interest in the organization, they will not qualify.
- The contribution must be directly related to promoting child care in Colorado.
- Tax credit shall not exceed \$100,000 per year
- Tax credit shall not exceed the state tax liability for the year. Any excess may be carried forward up to five years.

This brochure provides general tax planning suggestions on the subject matter covered and doesn't represent the rendering of professional advice or service by Qualistar Early Learning.. If expert assistance is required, please consult with a professional tax or legal advisor. Please call Qualistar Early Learning for a copy of Colorado Tax Information Form INCOME 35 (09/02) for complete information on the tax credit.

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