







EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION INFORMATION SNAPSHOTS


STAR RATING REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAMS SERVING PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN LICENSED CHILDCARE

 Early care and education programs that partner with either School Administrative Units (SAU's) or Child Development Services (CDS) must meet the Office of Child and Family Service, Rising Stars for ME 3-star rating requirements.

 Rising Stars for ME is the state's [Quality Rating Improvement System \(QRIS\)](#), and Maine Roads to Quality is the professional development network that supports achievement of the star ratings needed to demonstrate quality.

 This rating signifies a commitment to high-quality care, ensuring that programs meet essential standards for safety, staff qualifications, and early childhood development.

 A 3-star rating reflects a program's adherence to best practices in early learning, fostering positive child outcomes through an evidence-based curriculum aligned with the Maine Early Learning Standards (MELDS), including developmentally appropriate activities and a supportive learning environment.

 Childcare programs are required to meet the Rising Stars for ME rating of three stars when partnering with SAUs to serve preschool-aged children with disabilities. Child Care programs that are two stars can move forward in one of the following ways:

- [Apply for a waiver](#) and work with MRTQ to move from two stars to three stars by the August 2028 deadline.
- Choose not to participate in the ECSE connected program

 For additional information, please contact ECSE.Team@maine.gov