Keystone Standards, Training, Assistance, Resources, and Support (STARS). The Keystone STARS program provides Standards, Training, Assistance, Resources, and Support to facilitate continuous improvement and recognize achievement by child care providers, including school-age care. Keystone STARS establishes a quality rating improvement system, whereby each STAR designation is based on research-based performance standards or benchmarks that are linked to improving outcomes for children. Some specific examples of how school-age providers are supported in Keystone STARS are described below.

- **Standards** have been interpreted for school-age programs through the creation of school-age specific worksheets and optional tools which provide guidance for meeting benchmarks. Some Optional Tools that have been created support curriculum development and alignment with learning standards. A workgroup of nearly forty school-age stakeholders provided input to the worksheets. Other examples include:

  “Good, Better, Best: Pennsylvania’s Continuous Quality Improvement Guide to Best Practice” (GBB)- An optional tool that supports programs understanding of the more subtle continuum of quality contained within a standard and in meeting targeted standards to make incremental improvements within a STAR level or standard (particularly if not moving up a STAR level). Includes school-age program considerations at the Good, Better and Best levels.

  Career Lattice - Following are a few examples of clarifications to support school-age providers in meeting staff qualifications standards: credits may be in Education (excluding Secondary Education); continuing college students with at least 60 college credits/18 credits in ECE/EDUC - are at Level V; related fields include Human Development, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Education, Nursing, Home Economics/Family and Consumer Science, Recreation, Child and Family Studies, Human Services and Business

  For more information about the worksheets and optional tools, visit the [Forms and Tools](#) section of the PA Keys website.

- **Training** and professional development have been developed to assist practitioner movement on the Career Lattice (e.g. New Staff Orientation, SACC Credential) and understanding of linking curriculum and learning standards, coordinating and communicating with families and schools, observation and assessment.

  *Pennsylvania Core Knowledge Competencies for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals (CKC)* – These revisions are a result of a multi-year endeavor to align the CKC with existing state and national standards. These include the *Pennsylvania Department of Education Teacher Certification Guidelines Pre-K to 4th grade (Chapter 49-2)*, Pennsylvania Learning Standards (Infants and Toddlers, Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2), Pennsylvania Child Day Care Regulations Chapter 3270, *NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs*, and *NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria*.

  The revisions were informed by stakeholders and educators representing infancy through higher education; Early Intervention, and Head Start; Environment Rating Scale Assessors;
Keystone STARS and School-Age Child Care

(9/2014)

and professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) consultants, and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

Professional development modules have been created that are aligned to the competencies and support the following Standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SACC New Staff Orientation</th>
<th>Keystone STARS Recognition</th>
<th>Hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designed to help individuals become familiar with their new program, the children in their care, and the field of School-Age Care. Content includes keeping children safe, guiding behavior, activities, environment, professionalism, partnerships.</td>
<td><strong>Career Lattice: Level I</strong></td>
<td>15 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keystone STARS Standard</strong></td>
<td>STAR 2 Staff Qualifications requirement for new school-age staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- On-line, on-demand available through [Better Kid Care On Demand Lessons](#)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PA School-Age Credential</th>
<th>Keystone STARS Recognition</th>
<th>Hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A competency based program modeled after the Child Development Associate (CDA). Developed to support school-age practitioners participating in Keystone STARS. Coursework addressing the thirteen (13) Functional Areas, individuals must also complete a collection of information including a Portfolio, Resource File, Observations and Family Questionnaires. Individuals have 5 years from coursework completion to submit for assessment.</td>
<td><strong>Career Lattice: Level III</strong></td>
<td>120 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keystone STARS Awards</strong></td>
<td>Recognized for purposes of the Merit, Education and Retention, Voucher awards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Care Facility Regulations</strong></td>
<td>Recognized in regulation as equivalent to 9 credit hours from an accredited college or university in elementary education or child development and 1 year experience with children. (Same as CDA).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Credits – Currently will articulate to credit or can be taken for direct credit at approximately ten colleges and universities. The Regional Keys in partnership with regional professional development committees continue to negotiate with additional colleges. The rigor of the credential requirements, are written to appeal to the assessment requirements of colleges.

- Modality – Face to face, on-line (college and community-based)

More information about the credential components are available at the PA Keys website: [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org)
Select Early Childhood Programs and then select School-Age Programs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale</strong></th>
<th><strong>Keystone STARS Recognition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Hrs</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Meets the needs of child care facilities participating in the Keystone STARS child care quality initiative that are required to conduct a SACERS self-assessment of their school-age classrooms (majority of children in grades 1 and above). Participants learn about the indicators of quality in school-age settings, how the scale measures quality, and how to use the scale as a self-assessment tool. | *Keystone STARS Standard*  
STARS 2 Director Qualifications Core Series requirement.  
Will also meet STAR 2 annual Staff Development requirement in the area of ERS. | 2 hrs |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Observation Series (4 modules)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Keystone STARS Recognition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Hrs</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A series of modules introducing participants to the basic elements of conducting ongoing observation to support individual children, setting up the environment and sharing information with families.  
✓ Child Observation Level 1: The Basics of Observing Children  
✓ Child Observation Level 2: Unit 3: Using Observation to Support Individual School-Age Children’s Development  
✓ Child Observation Level 2: Unit 5: Using Observation to Create Responsive School-Age Environments  
✓ Child Observation Level 2 Unit 6: Sharing Your Observation with Parents, Team and School-Age Children | *Keystone STARS Standard*  
STAR 2 annual Staff Development requirement. | 2hrs ea. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Using Portfolios to Bring Out the Best in School-Age Children</strong></th>
<th><strong>Keystone STARS Recognition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Hrs</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A six hour professional development event to support the successful implementation of Portfolios to support children’s development and enhance program quality. The session may be delivered as two, three- hour sessions titled: Part 1 of 2: - Supporting Children’s Development and Enhancing Program Quality; Part 2 of 2: - Preparing for Successful | *Keystone STARS Standard*  
Content will support Observation/Curriculum/Assessment at STAR 2, 3 and 4 for school-age practitioners and meet Staff Development requirement for this same content. | 6hrs |
Implementation of Portfolios.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance Education Modules</th>
<th>Keystone STARS Recognition</th>
<th>Hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A variety of distance education (web-based and mail-based) modules are available through Better Kid Care. A few include the modules below.</td>
<td>Modules can be applied to annual Staff Development requirement.</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Building Relationships with Youth Who Challenge Us</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Tools of the Trade for School-Age Practitioners: Positive Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Science for Non-Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Project-based Learning-Standards Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Building Community Support for your Afterschool Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ 21st Century Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Inclusion/Special Needs in School-Age/Afterschool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Click2Science: Connecting to STEM Careers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Click2 Science: Sparkling Interest in STEM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Positive Youth Development: Building a Culture of Belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Positive Youth Development: Foundations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2012/13 five new modules were developed in collaboration with Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Network and the Center for Schools and Communities.
Keystone STARS and School-Age Child Care

Links to Learning (L2L)

A series of 26 hours of professional development modules, developed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), to support practitioner understanding of the role of afterschool in providing complementary supports to ensure developmental progress of children. Participants learn how to guide curriculum planning in afterschool and how to link activities to learning standards and quality standards. The content of the modules also explores theme- and project-based learning, coordinating and communicating with schools and family engagement. Following is a list of the modules:

**Core Series Requirement**
- Theoretical Framework - Learning and Development *
- Curriculum Planning Basics (including Youth Engagement)*
- Linking Activities to Benchmarks and Standards*
- Theme- and Project-based Learning (including Youth Engagement)*

**Additional Support Professional Development**
- Coordinating and Communicating with Schools
- Family Engagement
- Key Learning Area: Social and Emotional Learning
- Key Learning Area: Physical Activity and Healthy Learning
- Key Learning Area: Science
- Key Learning Area: Technology
- Key Learning Area: Arts
- Key Learning Area: Math
- Key Learning Area: Literacy
- Key Learning Area: Homework

Keystone STARS Recognition

**Keystone STARS Standard**

Links to Learning Foundations* (4 modules, 6hrs.) meets STAR 2 Director Qualifications Core Series requirement for learning standards for school-age programs.

Other modules meet STAR 3 annual Staff Development requirement in the area of curriculum and learning standards and supports Partnerships with Family and Community.

**Act 45 course**

3 credit course offered through the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network (PSAYDN), approved by PA Department of Education for Supervisory Certification.
- Counts toward Director Credential renewal for school-age directors (Keystone STARS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Links to Learning (L2L)</th>
<th>Keystone STARS Recognition</th>
<th>Hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Series Requirement</td>
<td>Keystone STARS Standard</td>
<td>1.5-2hrs ea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Support Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality - 5 -
A series of 34 modules that can be counted toward the professional development requirement for the School-Age Professional Credential or for PQAS credit as per the Core Body of Knowledge. Each module aligned with the credential Competency Goals and Functional Areas and the Core Body of Knowledge.

- **School-Age Growth and Development** (6 modules) *- continuum of development (5-12 yrs.), individual differences and impact on programming, managing groups, guiding behavior
- **Building the Foundations for Human Relationships** (6 modules)* - building relationships with children, families, schools and peers
- **Developing and Implementing Quality School-Age Programs** (12 modules)* - healthy and safe environments, indoor & outdoor interest areas, schedules, staff roles, planning with children
- **Professional Development** (3 modules)* – stress management, leadership styles and ethics
- **Program Management and Administration** (4 modules) – commitment to quality, implementing policy, marketing, managing budgets
- **Exploring Out-of-School Time Horizons** (3 modules) – exploring trends in afterschool, older youth, creating community collaborations

**Keystone STARS** Modules can be counted toward the 120 hrs. of professional development required for the school-age credential or to support ongoing professional development needs.

All have been aligned with the Core Body of Knowledge. Content meets multiple professional development requirements.

**Assistance** is available in the form of individualized on-site assistance aimed at achieving specified knowledge relative to performance expectations of Keystone STARS. Regionally based school-age child care organizations and specialists provide specialized professional development and technical assistance to support SACC providers participating in Keystone STARS. These agencies subcontract through the five Regional Key agencies. Some examples of assistance provided include:

**Professional Development Instructors and Technical Assistance Consultants** must be approved through the Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) demonstrating knowledge/experience in approved content areas. Some content requires additional approval through the participation in a Professional Development Instructor Institute (PDII) – example Links to Learning and Afterschool Quality (ASQ). Participation in PDIs is...
by application. Ongoing professional development supports are provided for instructors and consultants regarding best practice in instruction and technical assistance delivery.

**Afterschool Quality: Process of Program Improvement (ASQ)** - a five-step self-assessment process, supported by TA consultant, that helps programs examine program quality and strategies to make changes that will lead to better practices and more positive youth outcomes. ASQ provides concrete steps, process and tools to make the most of sources of evidence and implement a sustainable process for continuous quality improvement. The cornerstone of ASQ is a team approach and supports the use of any youth program quality assessment tool. Participating programs receive professional development specific to the model and up to 40 hours of technical assistance.

**Keys to Quality Afterschool: Environments Relationships and Experiences (ERE)** - best practices guide designed to provide a framework for continuous quality improvement. This toolkit consists of ten chapters. The first chapter introduces the Generations approach to understanding school-age care and identifies how Environments, Relationships, and Experiences (ERE) influence children’s growth and development. Each subsequent chapter highlights a specific content area related to “best practices” and engages the reader in transfer of knowledge and reflection through stories, examples, inquiries, charts, and strategies for implementation. Each chapter can be used as a stand-alone resource for professional development, staff meetings, and independent research or study by practitioners. This resource will be made available for providers participating in the School-Age Environment Rating Scale Core Series training and TA.

- **Resources and Supports** for example are available to SACC programs meeting eligibility and specific standards in the form of merit awards, education and retention awards, vouchers and tiered reimbursement. Keystone STARS Performance Standards connect learning/professional development and experience to compensation incentives. As individuals attain certain levels of education, they may qualify for additional compensation through the education and retention awards.

**Rising STARS Tuition Assistance** - Pays 95% of tuition costs for eligible college coursework taken by early learning professionals, with a maximum benefit of $4,500 per individual each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). The program covers tuition costs only, and does not include books, materials, or fees.

Individuals that work at facilities that serve school-age children only and are open a limited number of hours before and after school are eligible for the Rising STARS Tuition Assistance Program if they work 15 hours per week rather than 20. Staff members that are employed at facilities that are open longer hours, but who work exclusively with school-age children, will also be eligible if they work 15 hours per week rather than 20. Eligible degrees/programs for school-age child care staff will include Elementary Education, PreK-4; Elementary Education, 4-8; Recreation; Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) with a focus on elementary age children; and Youth Development Certificate delivered by an accredited Institution of Higher Education, as well as the Pennsylvania School-Age Child Care Certificate.

**Merit Award** - The STARS Merit Award is available to early learning and school-age providers to support continuous quality improvement as they achieve a STAR 2 or higher.
In order to be eligible for these grant funds, a facility must meet all the STARS Performance Standards associated with the STAR designation, at least 10% of total number of children in program received subsidy and/or participate in early intervention services, as well as hold a full DPW Certificate of Compliance.

**Education and Retention Award (ERA)** - The intent is to assist providers in establishing a stable workforce as they work towards higher levels of quality. In order to reduce turnover and improve the education of early childhood and school-age professionals, the STARS Education & Retention Awards is an annual financial award for eligible staff. To be eligible, a facility must meet site-specific requirements (including % of children being served by subsidy and/or early intervention services) as well as staff-specific requirements.

**Tiered Reimbursement** – Add-On Daily Rate for children receiving Child Care Works Subsidy is available for STAR 2, 3 and 4.

For more information about the Merit, ERA or Tiered Reimbursement, visit the PA Keys website: Click here