

## Refining the Keystone STARS Program

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### Impact: Roman, a STAR 4 Student

Roman is a student at Lehigh Valley Children's Centers at Monocacy Manor, which is a STAR 4 center. His mom, Becky, feels that Roman's preschool experience aligns with his well-rounded, supportive home life and allows Roman to learn and grow, both in and out of the classroom.



*Having Roman in a STAR 4 center has allowed me to depend on school to hold Roman to the higher expectations that I know he is capable of upholding. I feel, as a parent, it is my job to teach Roman to be responsible for his choices, work hard in all he does, and follow through in whatever he chooses to try. A STAR 4 center operates on the same philosophy and creates continuity between home and school. Each day his teacher discusses his strengths and sometimes weakness with me. I know what I need to reinforce at home and remind Roman about the next morning. Keystone STARS holds his teachers and center director to a higher accountability by following the learning standards and creating lessons to ensure he is a well-rounded child, learner, and eventually man.*

– Becky R., Lehigh County

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Education (PDE) recently received a report from the University of Pennsylvania with recommendations for refining Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania's largest quality early care and education program.

Keystone STARS, administered by DHS and PDE's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), promotes quality improvement among child care and other early childhood education programs through quality standards and targeted supports. Early learning programs earn a STAR 1 through STAR 4 rating by meeting standards for professional development and staff education, the early learning environment, family engagement, and business management. Keystone STARS serves children from birth through school-age in every county.

The University of Pennsylvania's Consortium for Policy Research and Education's report, *An Inquiry into Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS*, found that children who participated in STAR 3 or 4 centers showed higher proficiencies than children in STAR 1 or 2 centers.

An independent study conducted in 2006 found that Keystone STARS reversed the negative trend of declining quality in child care. Michelle Figlar, Deputy Secretary of OCDEL, said, "This report shows that our high-quality STAR 3 and 4 levels correlate with positive child outcomes."

The report, funded by the William Penn Foundation, made recommendations for strategies to refine the Keystone STARS program, which DHS will address with stakeholder input. The report is available at [Keystone STARS Inquiry Report](#).

My hope is that today is the start of something big, something meaningful, and we will make a big difference for the children of Pennsylvania.

– SECRETARY TED DALLAS

Discussing improving student outcomes with quality early education via Keystone STARS