

Frequently Asked Questions

BrightStars Public School Framework

Have a question that's not on the form?
Contact us at CQI@riaeyc.org



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children
An Affiliate of **naeyc**

General Questions

Question	Answer
How do I know who my BrightStars navigator is?	If you are unsure about who your BrightStars navigator is, please email us at CQI@riaeyc.org .
How do I begin applying to BrightStars?	Please click here to access an informational webinar created by our BrightStars staff summarizing our agency mission, our public school framework and the public school application.
How do I access the application?	After opening our website, please navigate to "Program Resources" and then to "Applications and Frameworks". Ensure that you are completing the appropriate public school application for the rating you're applying for.
How do I know what rating I should apply for?	BrightStars uses a building block approach to determine the overall BrightStars rating. This means that all quality indicators must be met in full before a program can receive the rating for that level. In other words, you will be rated individually in each of the 10 standards, and in order to achieve your desired rating, you will need to achieve that level or higher in each of the 10 standards.
I feel that my program falls under different ratings for each standard. What rating should I apply for?	If you feel that your program is rated differently for each standard, please choose the overall rating that most accurately reflects the level of quality that your entire program represents and list that rating for every standard on page 3.
How should I submit my application?	We accept applications through email to either your BrightStars navigator or to our email, CQI@riaeyc.org , through the mail, or hand delivery. We ask that your application is submitted 1-sided , and that you use paperclips rather than staples. We also ask that you submit in large mailing envelopes, rather than binders.
What documentation should I submit with my application?	Supplemental documentation depends largely on the rating you are applying for. Please closely review the application and framework to ensure you are only submitting the documents necessary for your requested star rating.
I'm running out of space when typing my answers into the boxes provided on the application. Should I attach a separate document to my application?	This is not required. We encourage programs to answer questions on the Curriculum Implementation plan and throughout the application in 2-3 sentences that answer the question.

Standard One: Learning Environment

Question	Answer
What should I expect from my classroom observation?	If you have applied for a 3-star rating or higher <i>overall</i> , our assessment team will come to your program for an unannounced classroom observation. Our assessors are looking to see a typical day in your classroom, so there is no preparation required.
Do the assessors use a specific tool to observe our classroom?	Our BrightStars assessment team uses the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales, third edition (ECERS-3) in public school classrooms with ages 3-5. To purchase your own copy of the ECERS-3, please use this link .
How do I know if the assessors are coming for a site visit observation?	Our assessors will visit your program for an observation if you are applying for an overall 3-star rating or higher. Once you submit an application and if you are eligible for a site visit, our assessment team will contact you and provide you with a observation window dates and other important information regarding a site visit.
One or more of my classrooms are currently being taught by a substitute teacher. Will their classroom be observed?	If the substitute teacher has been consistently leading the classroom for two weeks or longer, it is possible that they will be selected for an ECERS-3 observation.

Standards Two and Three: Staff/Child Ratio and Maximum Group Size

Question	Answer
Where can I find the ratio sign to post outside my classroom(s)?	Please use this link to access the BrightStars ratio sign to post outside your classroom door. This sign fulfills all requirements for Standards 2 and 3 of the public school framework.
Do I need to post the ratio sign outside all of the classrooms serving students aged 3-5 years?	Yes, you are required to hang signs outside each classroom.

Standard Four: Teacher Qualifications

Question	Answer
How do I know which Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) trainings my lead teachers are required to take?	Please use this infographic, linked here , to determine what trainings your teaching staff and program leaders will be responsible for taking.
Where can I access the RIELDS trainings?	RIELDS trainings can be accessed on the Center for Early Learning Professionals website, linked here . From there, you will need to create an account to access the RIELDS professional development courses.
The RIELDS course that I need to register for is closed. What should I do?	Professional development courses are only held during certain times of the year. Please subscribe to the Center for Early Learning Professionals newsletter to get notified about upcoming RIELDS trainings openings. Your BrightStars navigator will also communicate this information to you as the courses open.

What if my lead teacher has an emergency certification for their current position?	If your lead teacher has an emergency certification for their current position and has been leading the classroom for two weeks or longer, please submit all of the required documentation for that teacher with your application.
Should I include substitute lead teachers on the "Lead Teacher Qualification Form" and when submitting evidence for my BrightStars application?	If the substitute has been consistently leading the classroom for two weeks or longer, you are required to include them on the lead teacher qualification form, and include all of the required documentation for that teacher when submitting evidence for your BrightStars application.
Standard Four: TA Qualifications	
Question	Answer
Do I have to train all of the teaching assistants in my program?	No, you only need to train teaching assistants that are permanently positioned in a classroom serving students aged 3-5.
Should I include substitute teaching assistants on the "TA Qualifications Form" and when submitting evidence?	If the teaching assistant has been positioned in the classroom for two weeks or longer, you will need to include them in the teaching assistant summary form and you will need to submit their required documentation as well.
Standard Five: Program Leadership Qualifications (Principals)	
Question	Answer
Can the principal also identify as the education coordinator?	At this time, while data in the state is collected, a principal can assume the role of the education coordinator. However, they will be required to take any trainings or other requirements in the standard for both positions.
Standard Five: Program Leadership Qualifications (Education Coordinator)	
Question	Answer
What if my program doesn't have an education coordinator?	If your program does not have an identified education coordinator, you may leave this section blank on your application, or complete the section with the information of the staff member that directly oversees the preschool educators in your program.
Standard 6: Continuous Quality Improvement	
Question	Answer
What is the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)?	The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is a form that is completed 90 days after your program is rated. Your program navigator will be in touch with more information about due dates and the information to include in the document.
Where can I find the fillable QIP form?	The Quality Improvement Plan form can be found at this link , and on the Center for Early Learning Professionals website. It is in a fillable PDF format, so you will need to access Free Adobe Reader or utilize a PDF editing platform.
How do I complete the QIP form?	Similarly to the application, you will need to download and save the QIP to your computer before typing into it to save changes.
Standard 7: Curriculum	
Question	Answer
I use a RIDE approved curriculum. Am I required to complete the Curriculum Implementation Plan?	Yes, you will still need to complete the Curriculum Implementation Plan even if you are utilizing a RIDE approved curriculum. While you have determined a curriculum, the implementation plan looks for how that curriculum is implemented within your program specifically.
Standard 8: Child Assessment	
Question	Answer
How do I know if my program will receive a child assessment file check?	Our assessment team will conduct a child assessment file check if you are applying for a 3-star rating or higher. For more information on the child assessment file check process, please contact your BrightStars navigator.
Standard 9: Inclusive Classroom Practices	
Question	Answer
What does "community trainings" mean?	Community trainings are events held within local settings that aim to support and extend special education practices beyond the public school classroom. These may include educational meetings at local libraries to raise awareness of high-quality special education strategies, on-site coaching visits to community programs to assist educators in applying these practices, or informational sessions offered throughout the year. All of these examples fulfill the requirements for community training.
Standard 10: Family Communication and Involvement	
Question	Answer
Should I submit copies of my family newsletter?	No, we do not require copies of newsletters or family surveys. We do require a copy of the family handbook to be submitted with your application if you are applying for a rating that requires it.
Does my PTO count towards a family advisory committee?	Yes, this will fulfill this requirement as long as there are participating preschool family members in the organization.