



North Texas Area United Way

Impact Target RFP Specifications

Early Childhood Education Quality Improvement

Race for the Stars

Focus Area: Education

Significant Dates

RFP release date: December 1st, 2011

Pre-application conference: December 7th, 2011. 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Conference will be held at the North Texas Area United Way conference room. RSVP to Marilyn (322-8638) by December 6th, 2011. If you are unable to attend, please contact Theresa Welch at (322-8638) to schedule an individual apt. Agencies wanting to apply to funds will not have access to the application until they attend the pre-application or meet with United Way staff.

Submittal deadline: 5:00 pm December 22nd, 2011 (late applications will not be accepted)

Site visits: All applicants must submit a proposal through United Way's Community Techknowledge database. United Way and the Early Childhood Education selection committee have the right to perform a site visit prior to determination of funding. United Way will schedule site visits in a collaborative manner that meets the needs of the provider.

Date of notification: January 6th, 2012

Commencement date: January 23rd, 2012

Impact Target

The Race for the Stars quality improvement objectives:

- Determine the availability of quality early childhood education in the Wichita Falls area.
- Improve the quality of early childhood education so that children are more prepared for school.
- Increase the number of children who have access to and are receiving quality early childhood education.

This project is looking to fund the following:

- The Race for the Stars quality improvement program is a program for early childhood education centers or providers (serving a total of approximately 125 children). The early childhood education providers involved in this grant will have a primary focus on increasing the quality of their program so children are more prepared for school.

The components of the quality improvement program include:

- **Assessment:** Assessment of current child care quality using components of the ITERS/ECERS environmental rating system, Caregiver Interaction Assessment, and other assessment tools. Results from the assessment will be used to develop a quality improvement plan and place a provider into a tiered 5+ star level.
- **Intensive coaching/mentoring:** Child care providers will partner with a child care coach to receive support in increasing the quality of early childhood education.. The child care coach will develop, in conjunction with the provider and assessor, a quality improvement plan. The coach will work in a collaborative manner with the child care providers to implement the quality improvement plan and increase quality of program, through the provision of on-site professional development and mentoring.
- **Professional development:** Comprehensive professional development program for early childhood education staff. Professional development will include access to scholarships for CDA (Child Development Associate) certificate. All providers enrolled in Race for the Stars will be required to develop a year long logical, coherent, professional development plan in collaboration with staff.
- **Director best-practice exchange:** All providers engaged in Race for Stars will attend a monthly director support/exchange group that focuses on best practices, barriers, strengths and solutions to increasing quality.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Engagement Programs: Parent engagement is a significant component of the Race for the Stars programs. Providers who engage in Race for the Stars are required to develop and implement a culture of parent engagement and support within their facilities. Providers will have technical assistance and funds available to develop and implement parent engagement strategies that will increase parental involvement in early childhood education.
<p>Arenas of Action for funding in FY 2011-2012 (all proposals must be directed at all of identified arenas of action)</p>	<p>Improve the quality of early childhood education for children birth to five.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Impact Council</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Policy statement to Achieve Impact Target: More families and children will have access to high quality child care.</p> <p>One of the impact targets of the Early Childhood Education Impact Council is that more families and children will have access to high quality child care. This goal requires a significant change in community conditions and community norms that cannot be achieved without the participation of the residents.</p> <p>Since we believe that quality early childhood education requires input from community, educators, and families - and that parents are integral to the creation of their children's well-being - we are committed to working with agencies that support and promote quality early childhood education.</p> <p>The purpose of Race for the Stars is to promote kindergarten readiness and life-long learning in a safe environment so that children are ready for school, have higher graduation rates, and have improved capacity in becoming successful, contributing members to society. The vision of the program is that <i>all</i> children will have access to quality early childhood education in the North Texas Area United community so that children will flourish in a nurturing environment and will have the capability to lead them to be successful, contributing members of society.</p> <p>Research over the last 15 years in the area of early childhood education has shown that the quality of early childhood education a child receives greatly impacts their achievement in school. At least four components have been identified that have the largest impact on the quality of early childhood education; the interactions of caregivers and children; the ratio of staff to students, the professional development offered to staff, and salary. Quality early childhood education impacts every child regardless of race, age, or socio-economic status. However, empirical research has</p>

**North Texas Area
United Way
(Community level
outcomes that will be
pursued on a long term
basis)**

identified that access to quality early childhood education can have the greatest impact on children who are at risk due to poverty, parental substance abuse, and from single parent homes¹.

Nationally, the issue of the lack of quality early childhood education in many communities has gained momentum with President Obama's focus on education. The lack of quality early childhood education coupled with poverty can bring out life-long changes in children. Research has shown that children, especially those under the age of five, can suffer extreme consequences from being exposed to disadvantages early in life. Research also shows that children who grow up in poverty suffer irreparable brain changes during the first five years of life². According to Dr. Knight, "Kids from lower socioeconomic levels show brain physiology patterns similar to someone who actually had damage in the frontal lobe as an adult".

In the North Texas Area, we have historically not been able to assess the level of quality in early childhood education. The state of Texas has implemented the Texas Rising Star Program to assess and promote quality early childhood education; however, there are approximately twenty participating centers out of 160 early childhood education centers and home daycares. In addition, the Wichita Falls Area has no available facilities accessible to the public that are accredited by the National Association of Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The Race for the Stars program is designed to determine the availability of quality early childhood education, provide resources for providers to increase quality and promote a culture of quality in our community among parents, providers and businesses.

This project will support the North Texas Area United Way's Community Impact Targets of:

- Children, age birth to five years, enter kindergarten with skills and experience to learn.
- Children reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade
- Youth graduating from High School with a 4-year completion rate

Oppenheim, J., MacGregor, T., (October 30, 2002). The Economics of Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.democracyandregulation.com>

² Sanders.R., (December 2, 2008). EEGs show brain differences between poor and rich kids. Retrieved from: http://berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2008/12/02_cortex.shtml

Eligible Organizations

Requirements of submitting organizations:

- Applying facilities must be located within the neighborhoods of Lynwood or Eastside **or** serving a high percentage of children from these neighborhoods (at least 25% of enrolled children)
- Must have maintained a Texas State Child Care full license or be an additional site / branch of an existing licensed center with Wichita Falls without current significant and consistent violations and in compliance with regulations. The licensed center (or branch) must not be on probationary status with the state and not have an action plan in place with licensing. Providers with violations of abuse and neglect are not eligible to apply for funds through this Request for Proposal.
- Applicants will have opportunity to explain licensing violations on funding proposal.
- Must serve infants, toddlers, and/or pre-kindergarten children
- Each child care center must desire to improve the current quality of the program being offered
- Child care providers accepted as a site must agree to complete a self-assessment of program before January 23, 2012. Self assessment materials will be available through the North Texas Area United Way and provided to all grant sites.
- Must maintain accurate financial records and be fiscally accountable
- Eligible organizations must agree to:
 - Assessment of current quality using research proven tools
 - Development of quality improvement plan
 - Intensive coaching/mentoring
 - Intensive director level collaboration with the childcare coach so that the directors and/or assistant directors are the staff responsible for increasing the quality of early childhood education
 - One-on-one coach/teacher meetings away from the classroom
 - Director support/best practices exchange group
 - Monthly parent activities

Program Overview

- Use of name, logo, and current quality rating in marketing of the Race for the Stars program

The Race for the Stars program was designed by the Early Childhood Education Impact Team at the North Texas Area United Way to ensure that all children have equal access to quality early childhood education. The program is comprised of five components including: assessment, technical assistance, professional development, incentives, and rating. Each component of the Race for the Stars program will work in collaboration to improve the quality of early childhood education and in turn ensure that more students graduate from high school in the Wichita Falls area.

The assessment portion of the Race for the Stars program will use components of the ITERS/ECERS rating scale, Arnett Care Giver Interaction Scale, and other research proven tools to assess space/furnishings, personal care routines, language/reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, and parents/staff in each classroom of the participating centers. The ITERS/ECERS will be administered by an independent assessor who will work with the center staff to assess each classroom and then help with the development of a quality improvement plan. The ITERS/ECERS assessment will be re-administered at a maximum of once every twelve months during the span of the program.

After the assessment portion of the Race for the Stars program is complete, technical assistance will be provided to each center involved in the program. Technical assistance will come in the form of an onsite coach, director support group, and parent engagement group. The coach will work in conjunction with the assessor and the director to develop a quality improvement plan based upon the information provided by the ITERS/ECERS. After the quality improvement plan is developed the coach will provide weekly assistance in implementing the plan. The facility director and/or assistant director will work directly with the coach in order to implement the quality improvement plan within the classrooms and facility. The role of the coaches is to **support** the directors in facilitating improvement within their organizations. In addition, the center director will be responsible for attending a monthly director support group which will focus on the exchange of ideas and best practices.

Community based professional development will be provided to each center involved in Race for the Stars as well as the child care community at large. The professional development program will be structured in a way that will provide consistent and logical professional development. The child care staff receiving this grant will have access to a total of four scholarships that will pay for the CDA tuition, certificate fee, books, and other fees.

Incentives will be provided to each child care center involved in the program. The center director, along with the child care coach, will decide how the incentive money will best be utilized in accordance with the quality improvement plan. Each center will be required to design and implement monthly parent engagement strategies with

- Use results from components of the ITERS/ECERS, Child Care Giver Interaction Survey, and other research proven tools to develop a quality improvement plan with the help of the child care coach and assessor
- Collaborate with childcare coaches to implement the quality improvement plan whereby the facility directors and/or assistant directors are directly involved in the promotion and sustainability of improvement within individual classrooms.
- Implement a professional development plan for child care center staff which includes attending monthly professional development sessions and/or working toward a CDA (the professional development should include off-site training or outside consultants as well as in-house training)
- Provide staff coverage for director and/or assistant directors to participate with staff in one-on-one feedback from director/coach/teacher/classroom observations or video sessions
- Attend monthly director best practice/support group to exchange information with other child care center directors.
- Attend monthly North Texas Area United Way Education Council meeting and contribute to community-wide education strategies
- If eligible, serve as a CDA advisor to staff enrolled in the program

If first phase activities are not completed, funding will be discontinued

Intermediate/Long Term Activities (including but not limited to):

- Begin initial phase of implementation of the quality improvement plan
- Engage in weekly coaching with quality child care coach
- Implement parent engagement strategies
- Develop relationships with key common stakeholders
- Publicize program
- Mentor another child care program
- Reassessment every twelve months
- Provide support, guidance, and accountability to staff enrolled in the CDA program

Example long term outcomes (including but not limited to):

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of staff • Increase in the number of children who enter kindergarten with the skills necessary to be successful • Increase the quality of child care program as determined by increasing star level through scores on the ITERS/ECERS, Child/Care Giver Interaction Survey, and other research proven assessment tools. • Develop and implement parent engagement group which involves parents in the development of quality in education <p>Long Term Change in Community Conditions goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children are entering kindergarten ready to succeed as determined by scores on the TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) • Increase in the number of students graduating from high school
<p>Potential dollars available</p>	<p>All sites will receive financial compensation that correlates with the level of quality being provided in order to increase and sustain quality within their program. Financial compensation includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A \$1,000 bonus for each staff member that completes the CDA program • A retention bonus will be awarded to staff of each participating center completing a full year from pre-assessment to post assessment in the same center • An initial incentive award per center will be given based on the star level at which they enter the program using the following guidelines: Level 1: \$200.00; level 2: \$750.00; level 3: \$2,200; level 4: \$4,000; level 5: \$5,500 • An annual enhancement award will be provided to centers that increase their level by at least one star level during a 12 month period. (pre-assessment to post-assessment) This will be a flat increase of a one-time award of \$2,000. • A facility improvement incentive will be available to participating providers based upon a quality improvement plan that incorporates specific requirements of safety, licensure and/or accreditation. Distribution of funds will require a 50% match from providers. • A critical needs award will be given to each center based on the number of subsidized children enrolled and the star level of quality. Please refer to

	<p>appendix A for a break down of the critical needs award. The critical needs award is intended to be used to increase the quality of early childhood education in conjunction with the quality improvement plan. For example, depending on the strengths and barriers of each program, funds could be used to increase educational levels of staff, increase salary and/or benefits of staff in order to retain highly trained childcare providers, implement parent engagement programs, market their program and purchase equipment that improves the safety and/or classroom learning environment. Each provider receiving the critical needs award will be required to submit quarterly statements to United Way demonstrating how the funds were used in collaboration with increasing quality and in accordance with the quality improvement plan. Critical needs funding is determined on a daily basis and will be paid monthly when an invoice is given to the finance department of North Texas Area United Way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum funds of up to \$2,000 per classroom will be provided to participating facilities. Curriculum funds are intended to support facilities in purchasing evidence-based curriculum that support high quality early childhood education. Facilities who are already using an evidence-based curriculum that meet the needs of the center will not be eligible for these funds. <p>Funds are available on a per year basis based on availability of funds and achievement of outcomes. Providers who do not demonstrate a culture of quality improvement and who do not meet their outcomes on their quality improvement will be subject to termination from the program. Unused funds during the period of termination will not be available to providers.</p>
<p>Evaluation Criteria</p>	<p>Child care centers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of provider (director, teachers, agency upper management, and governing board) commitment to improving the quality of child care • The child care provider’s mission compatibility with the North Texas Area United Way’s Race for the Stars program goals • Child care provider’s willingness to commit to the extensive time requirements (i.e. training, consultant visits, leadership training, evaluation requirements) attendance at education Council, Directors Best Practice Exchange and an overall effort to participate as an active Race for the Stars Center • Provider involvement in other child care quality improvement programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of sufficient details and description to enable reviewers to determine how the child care center operates • Other areas that may be considered include: hours of operation, percentage of at risk families served, number of classrooms, number of infants and toddlers served, percentage of staff retention
Impact Target Contact Person	<p>Trish Dillmon North Texas Area United Way Director of School Readiness (940)322-8638 tdillmon@ntauw.org</p>
Additional Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC - National Association for the Education of Young Children http://www.naeyc.org • Texas Rising Star TWC - Texas Rising Star Provider Certification • Texas Childcare Licensing DFPS - About Child Care Licensing • Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition http://www.tecec.org/ • Children’s Learning Institute http://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/ • Annie E. Cassie Foundation The Annie E. Casey Foundation - Annie E. Casey Foundation - Home • Kellogg Foundation W. K. Kellogg Foundation - Home • Rand Report RAND Research Areas Child Policy

North Texas Area United Way Community Building Principles

A principle is an idea, assumption or belief that supports the way business is done. United Way's Community Building Principles will guide UW's future work.

Principle	To carry out this principle United Way and its Partners will:
<i>Build Capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that information portraying community needs/problems is balanced with information about community assets and that the information is shared with all affected individuals and groups. • Build on the strengths of individuals, associations and institutions. • Identify and develop leadership potential of people at a grassroots level and provide them with opportunities to lead. • Support the development of solutions that will effectively build upon the capabilities and assets of each neighborhood and community through the strengths of individuals, families associations, and organizations.
<i>Participation & Inclusion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly involve people affected by issues to decide, develop and implement solutions in their neighborhoods and communities. • Recognize and celebrate the differences, uniqueness, and cultural traditions of residents in neighborhoods and communities by encouraging and supporting inclusiveness. • Create an environment that welcomes and supports the participation of all people who want and value opportunities to work together.
<i>Citizenship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to mobilize communities for collective action. • Encourage activities that promote the core principles/values embedded in the concepts of citizenship and democracy. • Encourage individuals/groups to freely express their views. • Promote the concept of collective leadership and responsibility in addition to individual leadership and responsibility.
<i>Collaboration & Partnership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage activities that respond to the uniqueness of each neighborhood and community by bringing together the strengths of local individuals, associations, businesses, faith-based entities and other organizations. • Engage people to reach decisions that can be agreed upon and supported by all parties

	<p>involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote open, two-way communication with an emphasis on active listening.
<i>Comprehensive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create incentives for approaches/interventions that cut across program boundaries whenever and wherever possible (e.g., education, employment, housing, health and human services). • Balance priorities that focus on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target the development of neighborhoods and communities • Support the integration of community economic development, human services and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building.
<i>Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a learning environment. • Support a responsible risk-taking environment that allows communities/organizations to continually learn. Growth/change demands a total systems approach in which we are all brought along together.
<i>Focus on Results</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a system that works collectively to gather, analyze, track and share information that makes a difference in people's lives. • Demonstrate genuine accountability for outcomes to residents, donors, and all stakeholders. • Acknowledge that to be successful this work requires a long-term commitment.

**North Texas Area United Way
Community Building Principles**

A principle is an idea, assumption or belief that supports the way business is done. United Way's Community Building Principles will guide UW's future work.

Principle	To carry out this principle United Way and its Partners will:
<i>Build Capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that information portraying community needs/problems is balanced with information about community assets and that the information is shared with all affected individuals and groups. • Build on the strengths of individuals, associations and institutions. • Identify and develop leadership potential of people at a grassroots level and provide them with opportunities to lead. • Support the development of solutions that will effectively build upon the capabilities and assets of each neighborhood and community through the strengths of individuals, families associations, and organizations.
<i>Participation & Inclusion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly involve people affected by issues to decide, develop and implement solutions in their neighborhoods and communities. • Recognize and celebrate the differences, uniqueness, and cultural traditions of residents in neighborhoods and communities by encouraging and supporting inclusiveness. • Create an environment that welcomes and supports the participation of all people who want and value opportunities to work together.
<i>Citizenship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to mobilize communities for collective action. • Encourage activities that promote the core principles/values embedded in the concepts of citizenship and democracy. • Encourage individuals/groups to freely express their views. • Promote the concept of collective leadership and responsibility in addition to individual leadership and responsibility.
<i>Collaboration & Partnership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage activities that respond to the uniqueness of each neighborhood and community by bringing together the strengths of local individuals, associations, businesses, faith-based entities and other organizations. • Engage people to reach decisions that can be agreed upon and supported by all parties involved. • Promote open, two-way communication with an emphasis on active listening.
<i>Comprehensive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create incentives for approaches/interventions that cut across program boundaries whenever and wherever possible (e.g., education, employment, housing, health and human services). • Balance priorities that focus on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target the development of neighborhoods and communities • Support the integration of community economic development, human services and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building.
<i>Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a learning environment. • Support a responsible risk-taking environment that allows communities/organizations to continually learn. Growth/change demands a total systems approach in which we are all brought along together.
<i>Focus on Results</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a system that works collectively to gather, analyze, track and share information that makes a difference in people's lives. • Demonstrate genuine accountability for outcomes to residents, donors, and all stakeholders. • Acknowledge that to be successful this work requires a long-term commitment.