



Media Alert: Photo Opportunity

Stars Arrive at Early Learning Center

Ohio's Highest Level Quality Award Issued to Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc.

Date: September 6, 2010

For Release: **September 8, 2010 (press conference details below)**



What Families Should Know

Parents seeking child care need to know about Step Up To Quality. Child care providers throughout Ohio are eligible and encouraged to participate in this excellence rating program. However, not all programs are capable or willing to submit to Step Up's stringent evaluation criteria. This is not the case for Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. The agency received notification that its New Lebanon center has earned the state's highest quality rating—Step Up to Quality's "Three Star Award".

A press conference will be held:

Wednesday, September 8, 2010

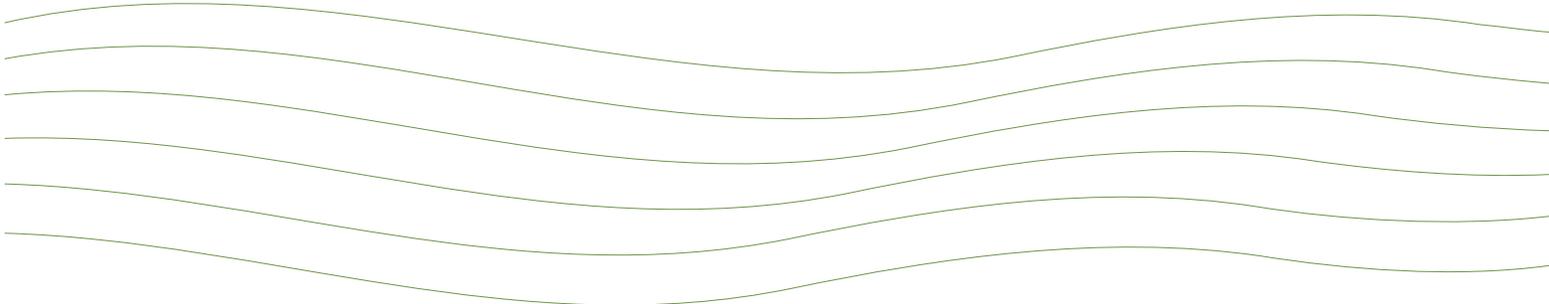
9:30 a.m.

New Lebanon Elementary School

1150 West Main Street

Dayton, Ohio 45345

(map attached)



Step Up to Quality signifies quality infant, toddler, and preschool care and education. It gives parents a tool to make informed choices. Participating centers earn a one, two or three star rating by meeting an extensive list of quality benchmarks that exceed state licensing standards. Examples of benchmarks include low child-to-staff ratios, group size, accreditation, staff education, specialized training, improved workplace characteristics, and early learning standards.

According to Mary Burns, MVCDC president/CEO, "This award can be equated to the five star rating system applied to the finest restaurant or premier hotel. Parents and their children deserve high quality early childhood education and development program choices. We know that 90% percent of brain development occurs before the age of five. Receipt of this ranking signifies how seriously we take our roles to ensure each child is prepared for success in Kindergarten."

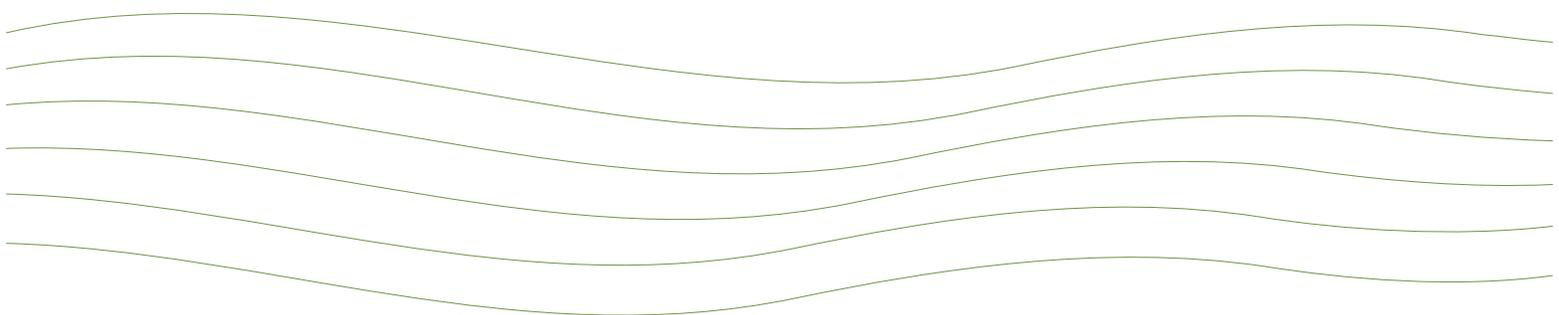
The newest Three Star award brings the agency's inventory of Step Up to Quality awards to 10 within its 21 centers. Measures are in place to phase this accreditation in its additional centers located in Clark, Madison, and Montgomery counties.

The benefits of using a star-rated program are:

- More teachers per child - this allows a teacher to spend more time with each child
- More qualified teachers - more training in early childhood development
- A commitment to early learning and Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards
- An outstanding work environment - paid staff benefits mean staff is treated professionally, which goes a long way in retaining good teachers

In order to qualify for the Three-Star Step Up To Quality program rating, MVCDC had to meet stringent criteria requirements:

- Ratio of one teacher for every:
 - four infants (ages birth-12 months)
 - five infants (ages 12-18 months)
 - six toddlers (ages 18-36 months)
 - ten preschoolers (ages 36-48 months)
 - 10 preschoolers (ages 48-60 months)
 - 15 school-aged children (ages 5-15 years); AND
- Administrator has a BA in Early Childhood Education or related field or Career Pathways level 4; AND
- Each classroom has a Lead Teacher with an AA in Early Childhood Education or related field for school age teachers or Career Pathways Level 3; AND
- 50% of Classrooms have Assistant Teachers who have a CDA or Career Pathways Level 2; AND



- 100% of Classrooms has Assistant Teachers with who have a Child Development Associate (CDA) or Career Pathways Level 2; AND
- Administrators, Lead Teachers, and Assistant Teachers receive a minimum of 10 clock hours of specialized training annually, above licensing requirements; AND
- A quality improvement plan is completed and implemented based on a Program Administration Scale (PAS) self-assessment, classroom assessments and input from parents and staff and updated annually; AND
- Human Resource Development Administrator and all teachers must have an annual professional development plan that at a minimum includes a performance appraisal, goals, and a plan for completing specialized training; AND
- Must offer three: Salary structure based on education and length of employment; employer offers and/or pays a portion of health insurance; 5 days of paid leave; paid professional membership; Education benefits (T.E.A.C.H.); retirement; discount on child care.

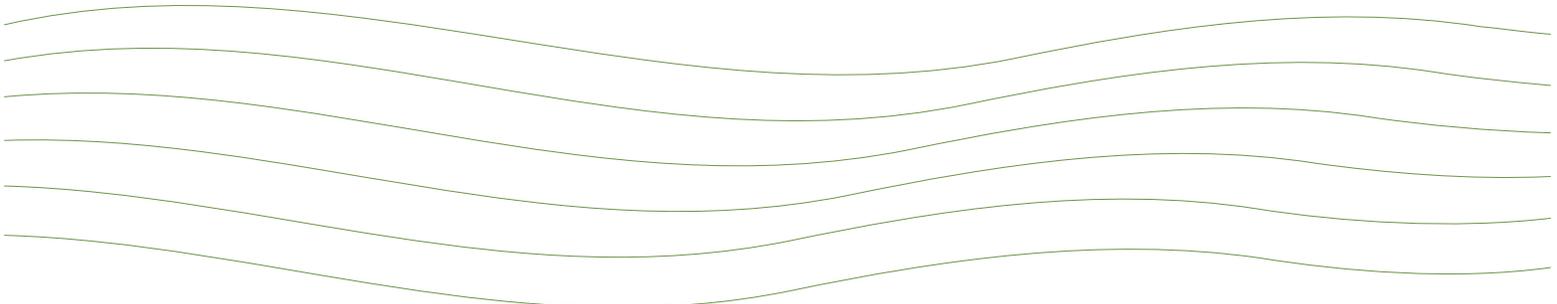
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ABOUT Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc.

Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. was incorporated in 1964 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation. The agency began providing comprehensive Head Start services to low income children ages three to five years in 1965. Today, Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. is funded to serve 2,522 children ages 3-5 years and 388 children ages 0-3 in Clark, Madison, and Montgomery Counties, Ohio. Funding is provided through the US Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; and the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education.

Head Start prepares children ages zero to five for success in Kindergarten and beyond. Each child is assessed at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the year. Results are regularly reviewed and tabulated to determine each child's progress and what is required to assist in their continued development. The program targets most of its services toward families of low income.

A primary focus of this effort is an emphasis on helping families by teaching parenting skills and life skills. We work holistically with each child and family through a balanced approach of parent involvement, health, nutrition, social competency, literacy and numeracy development. This combination is what ensures that Head Start children will be ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.



About 'Step Up To Quality': Ohio's Quality-Rating System

Step Up To Quality is a voluntary rating system for early care and education centers in Ohio. Participating centers earn a one, two or three star rating by meeting an extensive list of quality benchmarks that exceed licensing standards. Experts say these benchmarks improve the growth and development potential of children. The rating system also provides a useful tool for selecting quality early childhood programs. These benchmarks include low child-to-staff ratios, group size, accreditation, staff education, specialized training, improved workplace characteristics and early learning standards.

Step Up To Quality was created by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services - Bureau of Child Care and Development to improve the quality of child care in Ohio. Child care programs throughout Ohio are eligible and encouraged to participate. You can find more information about Step Up To Quality and search for star-rated programs by visiting www.StepUpToQuality.org.

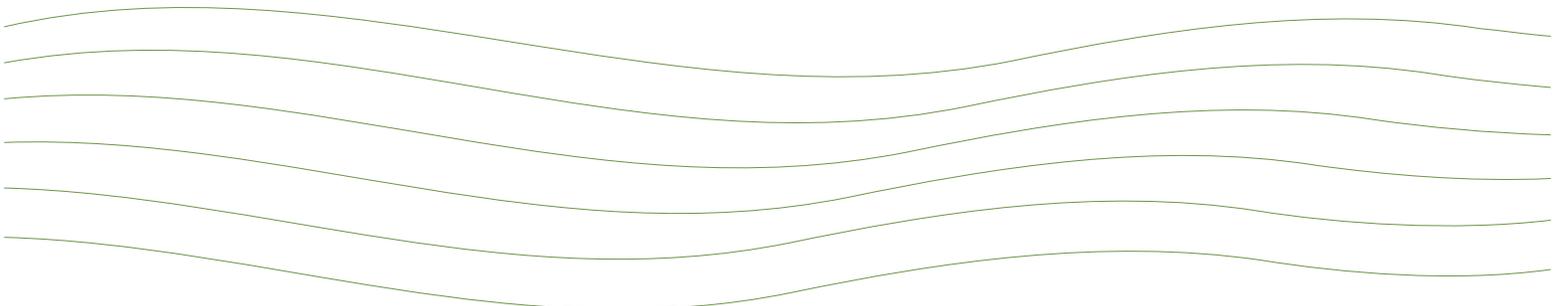
ABOUT Head Start

Created in 1965, Head Start is the most successful, longest-running, national school readiness program in the United States. It provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families. More than 22 million preschool aged children have benefited from Head Start.

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