

## Star 4 Quality Care – Northern Illinois University Campus Child Care



The DeKalb County Community Foundation (DCCF) is proud to announce that Northern Illinois University Campus Child Care has received a Star 4 Quality Rating from the State of Illinois. “We are proud to be part of a partnership that recognizes quality child care in DeKalb County”, stated Deanna Cada, Program Director with DCCF. NIU Campus Child Care offers quality care to children ages 2 months – 5 years and a summer school age program for children 6-8 years. Part-time and full-time care is available to NIU students, faculty and staff. Enrollment is open to the community in the preschool classrooms only. The center is accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Academy of Early Childhood Program Accreditation which serves as an indicator of a high quality program.

DCCF, through the CommunityWorks Impact plan, developed a goal that “The quality, availability and affordability of child care programs in DeKalb County have been increased.” In partnering with Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) the opportunity to support the Quality Rating System was a natural fit. The Quality Counts Quality Rating System (QRS) assist Illinois child care programs in providing quality care for children and their families. A provider’s participation in QRS means they have gone the extra mile to help make sure children are receiving an enhanced learning and care experience. Quality care can help children succeed in school and in life. A QRS Award recognizes a provider for meeting specific indicators of quality. It is an accomplishment to be shared with families served and the community. All QRS Awards recognize achievement above State minimum standards. Provides caring for children eligible for the IDHS Child Care Assistance Program also receive a quality bonus above the standard payment rate. Participation in the QRS is voluntary. Through the partnership with 4-C and the McHenry County Community Foundation, CommunityWorks supports the QRS Specialist position held by Stephanie Saville. The QRS Specialist works with eligible child care centers to first apply for QRS, and then advance in the QRS ratings. At each Star Level, the child care learning environment is evaluated and a percentage of center staff will need to exceed licensing standards for formal education. At higher Star Levels, the quality of program management is evaluated and National Accreditations are recognized.

There are only three Star 4 rated centers in the State of Illinois and NIU Campus Child Care is the first Star 4 center in DeKalb County. In 2010 NIU Campus Child Care received a Quality Enhancement Grant from DCCF for \$2,498 to purchase materials related to QRS including scales, gliders, books and musical instruments, all utilized to enhance the environment at the center. “We are very appreciative of the collaboration and support that was provided by 4-C and DCCF throughout this process of program assessment and improvement”, stated Christine Kipp, Director of NIU Campus Child Care, “we truly could not have done it without their assistance”. Since the start, when NIU Campus Child Care first received Star Rating, approximately \$73,631 additional dollars have come into the center as a result of the quality bonus.

To learn more about the Quality Counts Quality Rating System visit:

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies

<http://www.inccra.org/frequently-asked-questions-grs>