



## **Bluffton Child Development Center Wins State Award for Excellence in Early Care and Education**

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In recognition of excellence and an ongoing commitment to children, Bluffton Child Development Center has received a One-Star Step Up To Quality Award from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Bureau of Child Care and Development, the state agency responsible for licensing and promoting high standards among Ohio's early care and education programs.

Bluffton Child Development Center provides quality care that exceeds Ohio's licensing standards. This translates to more in-service training and a more nurturing environment for children to grow and develop. This outstanding dedication to children and early learning is why Bluffton Child Development Center has earned Ohio's Step Up To Quality One-Star award.

Step Up To Quality is Ohio's rating system for early care and education programs. Participants can earn a one, two or three-Star Rating by meeting an extensive list of quality benchmarks. Experts say these benchmarks improve the growth and development potential of children. The rating system also gives parents a useful tool for selecting quality early childhood programs.

One-Star Step Up To Quality programs meet these criteria:

- A ratio of one teacher for every five infants (ages birth-12 months) or 2:10, one teacher for every six infants (ages 12-18 months); one teacher for every 7 toddlers (ages 18-36 months), one teacher for every eight toddlers (ages 30-36 months), one teacher for every 12 preschoolers (36-48 months), one teacher for every 14 preschoolers (48-60 months), one teacher for every 18 school-aged children (ages 5-15 years)
- Teachers receive twenty hours of specialized training every two years
- To reduce staff turnover, the program provides at least one employee benefit to staff members
- Teachers are familiar with *Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards* and *Infant & Toddler Guidelines*

"Bluffton Child Development Center is proud to be a One-Star program. We know that learning begins the moment babies open their eyes. We're here to provide children with the rich developmental experiences so critical to their well-being. Thank you, Ohio, and thanks to our staff for their outstanding work."

As more parents join the workforce, more children are cared for outside the home. In Ohio, 65% of children under the age of six have both parents in the workforce. At the same time, 90% of brain development occurs before age six.

Children enrolled in high quality early learning programs, particularly low income children, are more likely to stay in school, attend college, earn more money and be employed in more high-skilled jobs than their peers.

Step Up To Quality is available statewide. To learn more, visit [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org) for more information.