



April 6, 2022

**Child Care Manual Procedure Letter 153**

**TO: All Child Care Manual Holders**  
**FROM: Matt Damschroder, Director**  
**SUBJECT: 2022 Changes to the Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) Program  
Reduction of Forms and Continuous Rating**

**Background:**

Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) is the quality rating and improvement system developed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to increase the quality of child care and early education programs. The current five-star system requires the completion and submission of numerous forms, ratings are only effective for a designated time period and an annual report is required.

**New Policy:**

To assist programs with reducing administrative burden, as well as in achieving and maintaining their ratings, the following changes will take effect on April 15, 2022:

<b>SUTQ Rating</b>	<p>The rating renewal process is being discontinued. A program's SUTQ rating will be continuous from their rating effective date. The SUTQ certificate for a continuous rating is valid with no expiration date. This does not include programs with specialized ratings, those ratings will continue to have an expiration date.</p> <p>The two-star rating will be continuous with no expiration date. Two-star rated programs will no longer register for a different rating within one year, and the rating is no longer limited to once every four years.</p> <p>Programs wishing to change their star rating must submit an ongoing rating registration.</p>
<b>Specialized Rating</b>	<p>Change of ownership, reinstatement and/or expedited ratings are not continuous, as they are time limited. Programs with these ratings must continue to follow the process outlined in Chapter 5101:2-17, of the Ohio Administrative Code.</p>

<b>Annual Report/Verification Visit</b>	The requirement to submit documentation for the annual report is being discontinued. SUTQ standards will be reviewed annually. One and two-star rated programs will receive a complete verification visit every other year to review all SUTQ standards. Highly rated three to five-star rated programs will receive a complete verification visit every three years.
<b>Standards</b>	The number of forms required for upload at registration for each star-rating has been reduced. The standards have been revised to identify sample forms that may be used to meet the standard. The updated standards are attached to this letter.
<b>Rating Reductions</b>	If a program's rating is reduced to a lesser rating, not a zero, this new rating will also be continuous. Programs cannot be awarded a new rating until six months from the new continuous rating effective date.
<b>School-Age Children</b>	Programs serving school-age children are not required to obtain or implement a school-age curriculum.

**Implementation:**

Currently rated programs do not need to take any action to make their rating continuous. All current rating expiration dates will be removed via a system process. The system process to remove rating expiration dates does not apply to change of owner, reinstatement, and expedited ratings, as these ratings are time limited as outlined in rule.

The Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS) will reflect these changes on April 18, 2022. Updated SUTQ certificates reflecting a continuous rating can be printed from OCLQS on April 18, 2022. System changes are being implemented beginning Friday, April 15, 2022, and will be completed Monday, April 18, 2022. OCLQS will not be available during this time.

	<b>Action</b>
<b>Annual Report</b>	<p>If your program's rating expires on or after April 15, 2022, you do <b><u>NOT</u></b> need to submit an annual report to maintain your current SUTQ rating.</p> <p>Disregard emails received reminding your program that the annual report is due.</p>
<b>Ongoing Rating/Renewal Registration</b>	<p>If your program's rating expires on or after April 15, 2022, you do <b><u>NOT</u></b> need to submit an ongoing registration to maintain your current SUTQ rating.</p> <p>Disregard emails received reminding your program to complete an ongoing registration.</p>

	<b>If your program's rating expires before April 15, 2022, it will be processed according to the current standards.</b>
<b>Specialized Rating</b>	If your program currently holds a change of ownership, reinstatement, or expedited rating, you must submit an initial registration within the 120- day deadline, as this rating type is not continuous.

Programs registering for a star rating can begin to use the revised forms on April 15, 2022. Forms completed and currently on file at a rated program do not need to be updated with these revised versions until a form is required to be updated.

**Prescribed forms that have been revised that appear in the standards:**

JFS 01509 "Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)" has been revised to clarify what is required for dates and goals, and for Family Child Care, to add the program owner's self-assessment (CKC).

JFS 01590 "Curriculum Standards Assessment Alignment Tool: Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers for Step Up to Quality Programs" is a new form that has consolidated the former JFS 01590 "Curriculum Standard Assessment Alignment Tool: Infants and Toddlers for Step Up To Quality" and JFS 01591 "Curriculum Standard Assessment Alignment Tool: Pre-Kindergarten Strand for Step Up To Quality". Further revisions include language clarification and the addition of blended curriculums.

**Sample forms that have been revised and have been added to the standards:**

JFS 01381 "Program Transition Policies For Four To Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)" has been revised to update form description wording.

JFS 01518 "Classroom Self-Assessment Action Plan for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)" has been revised to update the wording in some fields for clarification.

JFS 01587 "Professional Development Plan for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)" has been revised to mirror language in the rule standards.

**The following forms have been revised and are available on forms central as technical assistance documents:**

JFS 01369 "Records Transfer Policy/Request For Two to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)" has been revised to add a section to indicate which records are being transferred, and to update the parent signature to give authorization for the transferring of forms.

JFS 01379 "Health Screening Process for Three to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)" has been revised to include information previously on the JFS 01375 "Health Referral Process for Three to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)", which is being made obsolete.

JFS 01507 "Curriculum Selection Process for Two to Five-Star Programs for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)" has been revised to mirror language in the rule standards.

**The following forms have been made obsolete:**

JFS 01364 "Written Wage Structure for One to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01365 "Description of Professional Development Planning Process for One to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01366 "Community Resources Information for One to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01367 "Family Engagement Activities for Two to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01370 "Family Engagement Model or Process for Four to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01371 "Approved Staff Supports for Two to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01372 "Health and Child Development Information for Two to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01374 "Professional Development Plan Annual Summary for Three to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) Annual Report"

JFS 01375 "Health Referral Process for Three to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01377 "Family Education Information for Three to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01383 "Annual Survey Process for Four to Five-Star Ratings for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01508 "Action Plan for Selecting a Curriculum for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01511 "Family Information for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01512 "Developmental Screening Instrument for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01516 "Classroom Self-Assessment Tool Summary: One Through Five-Star Rating For Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01522 "Teacher Observation Summary for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

JFS 01591 "Curriculum Standards Assessment Alignment Tool: Pre-Kindergarten Strand for Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) Programs"

JFS 01593 "Curriculum Standards Assessment Alignment Tool: School Age For Step Up To Quality Programs"

JFS 01596 "Staff Worksheet For Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"

**Questions:**

Please contact the Child Care Policy Help Desk at [childcarepolicy@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:childcarepolicy@jfs.ohio.gov) or 1-877-302-2347, option 4, if you have any questions.