

Grants for Child Care Providers

Quality Improvement Grants and Early Learning Awards

All children deserve access to high-quality early learning and care experiences. Building and maintaining a quality program, however, can be costly. With support from Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), Michigan created a series of grants to help providers purchase the materials necessary to meet their quality goals. Over 3,700 grants were awarded by the **Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC)**, through the Quality Improvement Grant or Early Learning Award programs.

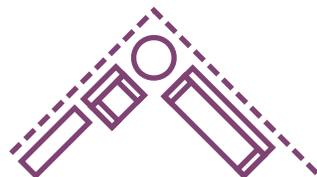
Need

A decade ago, Michigan began a statewide effort to dramatically increase focus on quality in child care settings. A key aspect of this work was establishing **Great Start to Quality—Michigan’s statewide rating and improvement system**. When Michigan was awarded RTT-ELC funds in 2013, only **6 percent** of providers participated in the rating system. Thanks to an ambitious effort—including providing funding for the resources and materials necessary to implement their quality goals—half of providers in the state are now quality rated.

A central component of the rating process is creating a **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**. This plan identifies strengths and opportunities for providers to improve. Depending on the identified goals, a QIP could require a financial investment. For some providers, slim profit margins make this investment challenging. **Quality Improvement Grants** aimed to remove this financial barrier by providing over **\$12 million** in support for child care providers to purchase tools and materials. This funding helped providers invest in curriculum and age-appropriate items for children, such as:



Screening, assessment, and curriculum items approved by Great Start to Quality



Furniture to replace current items or to establish defined play areas



Outdoor materials to establish outdoor play space or improve children’s play options

Grants ranged from \$500–\$5,500.

Eligibility

Eligible providers included licensed providers participating in Great Start to Quality. Providers were eligible to apply if they were in good standing with child care licensing, had a published rating with Great Start to Quality, served at least one child receiving a child care subsidy or participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and had developed a QIP.

These criteria were established based on stakeholder input, and later modified throughout the RTT-ELC grant period based on provider feedback to be more inclusive of all providers participating in Great Start to Quality and serving children at risk.

Goals

Providers:

- Help providers achieve a quality rating in Great Start to Quality
- Support financial sustainability to enable providers to stay in business
- Increase access to new materials and resources

Children and Families:

- Increase quality of children’s early learning environments
- Increase access to high-quality and age-appropriate materials
- Provide access to developmentally appropriate curriculum, screening, and assessment tools

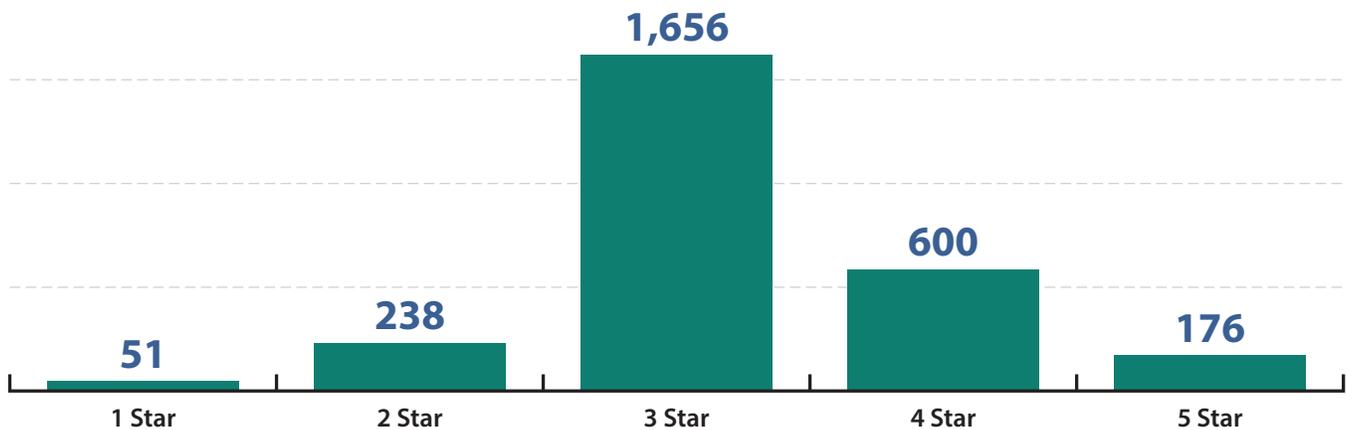
Child Care System:

- Improve the quality of care for children
- Help providers improve their star rating
- Better understand the barriers and needs of providers

Grantees

Across Michigan, child care providers were awarded **3,735 Quality Improvement Grants** and **Early Learning Awards**. In all, over **\$12 million** was awarded, and the average grant was **\$4,100**.

Grantees’ published rating as of November 2018



2,416

Providers serving infants and toddlers (reported)

Note: Some providers were eligible for Quality Improvement Grants and Early Learning Awards and were awarded funding through both programs.

2,027

Providers caring for children receiving the child care subsidy

Testimonials

“We now can offer an outdoor classroom that encompasses learning science, art, music, reading, large- and small-motor opportunities, along with play and climbing opportunities.”

- **Child Care Center**
Southgate, Michigan

“With these funds, we were able to purchase an approved preschool curriculum and outdoor materials to support that curriculum.”

- **Family Child Care Home**
Niles, Michigan

“The use of this technology will allow the teachers to document learning in new ways, increase the quality of the lessons, and increase the ways in which teachers can communicate with parents.”

- **Child Care Center**
Dexter, Michigan