



For Immediate Release

Contact:
Raymonde Charles, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
401-351-9400, Ext. 22 / rcharles@rikidscount.org

**Early Learning and Child Care Programs Honored at
2nd Annual Starry Starry Night Event**

BrightStars recognizes program quality and gives parents information to make choices about their children's care and early education.

1 in 4 programs participating in BrightStars significantly increased their program quality and improved their star rating

PROVIDENCE, RI, December 8, 2010 – More than 300 community leaders gathered for Starry Starry Night, an annual community event celebrating the child care centers, preschool programs and family child care programs that have joined BrightStars in 2010. The celebration was held on **Wednesday, December 8, 2010 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Providence Marriott**. The Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT sponsored the event. BrightStars is Rhode Island's early learning and child care programs quality rating improvement system.

Tammy Camillo, Director of the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children and BrightStars, stated, "Tonight we are honoring the 58 new child care, family child care and preschool programs participating in BrightStars. Each one has voluntarily stepped up to be rated by BrightStars during the last year. Participating in BrightStars is a demonstration of their commitment to quality and to creating a nurturing learning environment for children." As of December 2010, there were 77 programs (24 child care centers/preschool programs and 53 family child care homes) participating in BrightStars. More than 1,800 children were enrolled in the participating programs. Camillo announced that 10% of all licensed child care programs in Providence are in BrightStars and 1 in 4 programs made significant quality improvement to their star rating from the previous year.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, said, “Experiences in early childhood establish the foundation for the child’s cognitive achievements, mastery of social skills, self-confidence and respect for others. Children who participate in high-quality early learning and child care programs score higher on tests of skills and achievement and develop stronger cognitive, emotional and social skills. BrightStars helps programs learn about best practices and create high-quality learning environments for children.”

Rhode Island is one of 23 states across the country that has developed a quality rating and improvement system to systematically measure program quality, inform consumers about quality, encourage and reward incremental quality improvements, and align supports to improve quality. Launched in 2009, BrightStars is Rhode Island’s Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care and early learning programs. All licensed child care centers, preschools, center-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and family child care homes can participate in BrightStars. BrightStars is developing quality-rating standards for licensed school-age programs which will launch in 2011. BrightStars funding partners include the United Way of Rhode Island, CVS Caremark Charitable Trust, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, The Rhode Island Foundation, and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services.

#

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, education, safety and development of Rhode Island children.

BrightStars is managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (RIAEYC), a non-profit organization and the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Visit www.BrightStars.org for more information.