July 1, 2013 – Maryland EXCELS opened for statewide participation! In the first nine days, more than 200 programs applied to participate in our state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System, making the commitment to step onto the path of continuous quality improvement for early childhood and school-age child care.

**FIELD TEST CONCLUSION:**

- The Field Test concluded with 330 programs from every county and program type in the state.
- Four focus groups were held and four online surveys were conducted with field test participants to gain feedback and suggestions for improving the online system, supports for participating programs and the standards.
- To date, there are over 550 programs participating and 45 programs have published ratings.

**MARYLAND EXCELS WEBSITE:**

The Maryland EXCELS website is being updated. The new and improved website will contain:

- Updated look and logo;
- More information for families, staff, and community partners;
- Inclusive Practices information for families and programs;
- Program Coordinator and Quality Assurance Specialists bios and contact information;
- Resources for families, staff, program leadership, and community members;
- Improved systems and revised standards coming in November 2013.

**GUIDEBOOKS (FORMERLY WORKBOOKS):**

- A new draft of the Guidebook (formerly known as Workbooks) has been developed for Child Care Centers, School-Age Only Programs and Family Child Care program. When it is finalized, it will be posted on the website and provided to participants via email. The Guidebook provides background and support for using the Maryland EXCELS system and includes resources, definitions and Frequently Asked Questions.
- A separate Pre-Kindergarten version of the Guidebook is being developed.

**OTHER UPDATES:**

- A Mobile App is currently in development for families to search for programs in their area.
- Online modules to assist Providers/Educators, Program Coordinators, Quality Assurance Specialists, and Technical Assistance Providers are in development.
- Check the MSDE website for new information on Tiered Reimbursement and additional updates.
- **KAPLAN** is now partnering with Maryland EXCELS. Programs can receive discounts on orders, and access information and resources to design a variety of programs for children and their families. For additional information, visit [www.kaplango.com/mdprek](http://www.kaplango.com/mdprek).

**Maryland EXCELS CONTACT INFORMATION**

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