



Early Childhood Programs with High Returns on Investment

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Principle Elements of Quality Early Care and Education

- Highly skilled teachers
- Age-appropriate curricula and stimulating materials in a safe physical setting
- A language-rich environment
- Warm, responsive interactions
- High and consistent levels of child participation
- Small class sizes and high adult-to-child ratios

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creating force leading to movement

What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System?

- A Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a state level framework to assess, improve and communicate the quality of early learning and development programs.
- A tool for system reform that has the potential to reach programs that serve a wide range of children and are financed by many public and private sources, including parent fees.



QRIS Can Provide the Following:

- **Quality Assurances**
 - Aligning program and professional standards
 - Assessing and monitoring
- **Supply-Side Intervention**
 - Technical assistance and coaching
 - Professional development
 - Financial supports
- **Demand Side Intervention**
 - Consumer guide to quality
 - Links between quality child care choices and financial incentives



QRISs Include:

- An emphasis on improved children outcomes
- Standards for programs that are believed to affect child outcomes
- A tiered approach to measuring program quality which then guides improvements

The **Goal of a QRIS** is to help child care providers improve their early learning and development program so that the learning and development outcomes for children improve.



QRIS Frameworks



Mathematica/Child Trends: *Compendium*, April 2010

- Program, teacher and learning standards
- Monitoring/quality assurance
- Financial incentives
- Quality improvement supports
- Parent/consumer education/engagement



How does a QRIS Work?

Standards

- Chosen based on links between standard and program improvement and/or child outcomes
- Linkage supported by evidence or empirical research
- Provider and practitioner expertise

Fundamental Categories of Standards

- Learning environment (can include child assessment, teaching practices, curriculum)
- Staff qualifications
- Staff/child ratios and group sizes
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI, process standard)



Research Informing Practice

“We are far enough along in the work of developing QRIS that we can **review and revisit our initial conceptual frameworks**.... Conceptualization of QRIS as a single intervention is not accurate. QRIS is a hub or umbrella for **multiple activities that support quality improvement**. Activities that...clearly aim at strengthening child outcomes. But...[activities] that...encompasses [sic] **other important outcomes** that may only indirectly and over time contribute to children's development. Such outcomes include strengthening families, the professionalization of the early childhood workforce, and strengthening early care and education system. **Being explicit about these other outcomes**,...will help prevent including too wide a range of quality indicators in validation models predicting to child outcomes.”

Zaslow, M. & Tout, K. (2014), p. 8



Resources

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National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement (NCCCQI). (2014). *Increasing Quality in Early Care and Education Programs: Effects on Expenses and Revenues*. Washington, DC: Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/increasing-quality-early-care-and-education-programs-effects-expenses-and-revenues>

National Program Standards Crosswalk Tool (n.d.), by NCECQA
<https://occqrisguide.icfwebsiteservices.com/index.cfm?do=crosswalk>

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