

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: A National Perspective



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# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

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**Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) = a quality initiative that evaluates and observes, recognizes and rewards, and supports early childhood program quality improvement – with a strong emphasis on continuous quality improvement**

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

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- ❑ 20 states have implemented statewide
- ❑ 26 are in “QRIS development” process
- ❑ Development can show gaps in services and funding
- ❑ Framework for multiple efforts already underway

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – In Development Themes

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- ❑ Advocates working with key decisionmakers
- ❑ Some done through legislation
- ❑ Include planning and implementation phases – some QRIS began as pilots that expanded statewide
- ❑ Some use building blocks approach
  - MO, NE, NJ, SD
- ❑ Some use a points scheme
  - KS, OR

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Statewide Themes

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- Some use a building blocks approach
  - DE, DC, IL, IN, KY, ME, MD, MT, NH, NM, NC, OH, OK, PA, RI
  
- Some use a points scheme
  - CO, IA, LA, TN, VT
  
- Majority are voluntary
  - NM, NC, TN first level are mandatory

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Benefits

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- ❑ Improving professional development and higher education opportunities for program staff and directors
- ❑ Enhancing compensation to reflect additional education and working to create retention in the field
- ❑ Providing financial incentives and increasing reimbursement rates and /or additional payments to reflect the cost of quality programs

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Benefits

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- ❑ Expanding family involvement and understanding of quality early childhood education for consumers and programs
- ❑ Providing technical assistance and fairly and consistently evaluating programs for meeting evidence-based indicators of quality
- ❑ Promoting programs' continuous improvement, regardless of setting, to encourage achievement of higher tiers

# NAEYC Position on QRIS

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- Emphasis on “*quality improvement system*”
- All elements, not just ratings, must get full attention:
  - Resources for programs to move to the next level and sustain higher quality
  - Infrastructure needs – licensing, staff, resource and referral, professional development, technical assistance
  - Providing information in accessible ways to consumers, programs, and providers

[http://www.naeyc.org/policy/state/public\\_policy\\_program.doc](http://www.naeyc.org/policy/state/public_policy_program.doc)

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Components

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- More than tiered reimbursement for programs that accept subsidies – all programs can participate
- Create a system that includes:  
**standards, accountability systems, consumer education, program and provider outreach and support, and financing**

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems - Standards

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- ❑ Build upon state child care licensing regulations - create a pathway of 2 or more levels of quality criteria above licensing
- ❑ Help centers see a path to attaining NAEYC Accreditation
- ❑ QRIS criteria and NAEYC Accreditation criteria address similar components of quality

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – NAEYC Accreditation

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- **18** states link NAEYC Accreditation to the top tier of their QRIS
- NAEYC position: The top tier of a QRIS should include program accreditation by a valid national early childhood program accreditation system, including NAEYC Accreditation for center-based and school-based programs

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems - Standards

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**Specifically, QRIS standards and criteria address:**

- ❑ Physical environment, including class size and ratios as well as health and safety
- ❑ Staff qualifications and professional development – including scholarships and compensation
- ❑ Interactions between teachers, children and families

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Standards (Cont.)

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**Specifically, QRIS standards and criteria address:**

- ❑ Developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum and classroom practices
- ❑ Regular program evaluation and public reporting
- ❑ Continuous program quality improvement

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Selected Research

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A 2003 evaluation of Oklahoma's QRIS, Reaching for the Stars, documented the links between accreditation and specific determinants of quality. The study included a group of centers at the highest level of the QRIS, 50 (89%) of which were NAEYC-accredited (Norris DJ, et. al., 2003).

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Selected Research

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Compared to the other centers participating in the Oklahoma study, accredited centers:

- Had higher ITERS and ECERS-R scores
- Reported the lowest staff turnover rates
- Had staff who participated in more professional development opportunities
- Had more directors that had bachelor's degrees or higher with a specialization in early childhood/child development
- Were more likely to employ teachers with a baccalaureate or higher degree

<http://www.csctulsa.org/images/Stars%20Research%20-%20Full%20report%20Nov.%200310.pdf>

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Selected Research

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The 2006 evaluation of Pennsylvania's QRIS, Keystone Stars, evaluation found that:

- Child care centers participating in Keystone STARS in 2006 have higher quality than the Pennsylvania average for child care centers and are showing higher quality now than at the inception of the STARS program.
- Both child care centers and home-based practitioners with a defined curriculum had higher overall ERS scores.

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Selected Research

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- Both child care centers and family child care homes, regardless of STAR level, had significantly higher ERS scores when the teacher had at least an Associate's Degree.
- Participating NAEYC-accredited early childhood programs "had [ECERS-R] scores that *met or exceeded* STAR 4 centers", which were at the highest level of the state's QRIS but met additional criteria to reach that level. This data could be used as the basis for NAEYC-accredited "centers being allowed to enter the system with a STAR 4 rating"

(Barnard W, et. al., 2006).

<http://www.pakeys.org/docs/Keystone%20STARS%20Evaluation.pdf>

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems - Accountability

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## Includes:

- ❑ Documenting and justifying the funding needs and costs
- ❑ Assessing whether programs are complying with quality criteria
- ❑ Assessing technical assistance needs for a program, ensuring an adequate number of well-trained evaluators
- ❑ Assigning a QRIS level for programs using program assessment

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Consumer Education

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- Outreach to families and other consumers about the QRIS
- Use of an easily recognized and understood symbol for levels of QRIS (i.e. stars)

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Program and Provider Supports

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## □ Financial Incentives

- Scholarships
- Enhancement grants to programs
- Compensation awards
- Quality bonuses
- Tiered child care rate reimbursement

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems - Supports

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- **Non-financial incentives and supports:**
  - Outreach staff and orientation sessions for providers
  - Mentoring and coaching
  - Linkages with Accreditation Facilitation Projects
  - College courses and distance learning

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems - Financing

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- **Five main sources of funding for QRIS:**
  - Federal (CCDBG and TANF)
  - State
  - Local
  - Corporate
  - Foundations
- Major costs for QRIS: designing the system, system administration and accountability, supports for providers and programs, and outreach to families and other consumers

# Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – The Forecast

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- ❑ Concern that certain sectors of the field, certain populations not being reached through QRIS
- ❑ Focus on intra-tier quality improvement, as opposed to inter-tier movement
- ❑ Future funding an issue

# Resources

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## □ NAEYC

<http://www.naeyc.org/policy/state/>

<http://www.naeyc.org/academy/ResourcesAboutAccreditation.asp>