

2015 QRIS NATIONAL MEETING: Higher Ground – Taking Quality to Scale



July 15-17, 2015



Draft Plenary, Workshop and Discussion Topics

Listed below are some of the topics to be shared and discussed as part of the 2015 QRIS National Meeting. While this list is still a work in progress, it provides details on what to expect at this year's conference.

101. Taking Quality to Scale

What does taking "quality to scale" mean and is it viable? Is the goal to make every early learning program a high quality one or assure only that every at risk child is in a high quality program? Does quality mean we are shooting for the optimum level of quality or a more moderate level that is attainable and affordable given limited resources? What is needed within key system components in order to attain quality at scale and what is needed from a state policy perspective? Are there economies of scale that can make this goal more affordable? A panel of state and national leaders will debate and probe the potential for taking quality to scale.

104. Challenges in Costing and Financing QRIS Systems: Experiences From Several States

This presentation will explore key issues in estimating the costs and financing associated with delivering quality ratings and quality improvement services to providers. Drawing from several QRIS cost and financing research projects around the country, we will consider issues including identifying cost-related components of QRIS systems; understanding how variables such as provider size, auspice, and geography cause costs to vary; and comparing costs of quality with available funding streams.

106. Provocative Conversation: Letting Go as QRIS Evolve

Taking quality (QRIS) to scale requires different strategies at different times. Tight systems, carefully controlled, intensively supported in the establishment stage ensure that outcomes are reached and evaluations show progress. As systems evolve, the actors in them take more responsibility and control over processes. As QRIS expands encompassing more players (rated programs, diverse families) it necessarily must focus intently on cost efficiency, consumer satisfaction. What stays? What goes? Let's talk...

114. Using Technology In Your QRIS: Options for Teacher Coursework, Peer Assistance and Coaching

This session will explore different aspects of quality improvement in the QRIS that can successfully leverage technology. Drawing on work in Massachusetts (MA) and Virginia (VA), we'll see how technology is integrated in the cross-sector competency and self-assessment for TA providers and the peer assistance and coaching project and explore how a pilot for teacher on-line courses can now be scaled as part of a QRIS. Join us for an engaging and informative session that will blend group brainstorming, reflection and activities.

116. Effective Workforce Development Through a Continuous Quality Improvement Framework

A panel of state and local leaders will share workforce development innovations within a QRIS system, including coaching models, use of the CLASS tool, and partnerships to address higher education equity and access, high quality teacher preparation, effective teaching practices, and strong site leadership. In this interactive session, participants also will strategize ways to use continuous quality improvement as a foundation to build an educated, effective, diverse early learning workforce.

117. Post CCDBG Reauthorization – Moving the Conversation from Health and Safety to Quality to Scale

The recent reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) establishes for the first time a federal floor for health and safety requirements in child care settings. Having finally established this floor for basic health and safety, it is now time to begin envisioning the next generation of CCDBG and federal early childhood reform – bringing quality to scale through QRIS and national accreditation.

118. Strategies to Promote Head Start, Early Head Start and State Prek Participation in QRIS

This session will highlight state approaches to inclusion of Head Start, Early Head Start and State Pre-kindergarten programs in QRIS. Strategies highlighted will include reciprocity or alternative pathways, policy and incentive structures specific to these settings.

119. Outreach to High Need Populations

This session will highlight state strategies to reach child care providers serving high need populations including migrant/seasonal families, dual language learners, rural populations and Tribes. Discussion will focus on community driven approaches and modifications to service delivery that promote broader, meaningful participation.

120. Acting on Kindergarten Readiness Assessments to Improve Child Outcomes

How can a state translate kindergarten readiness assessments into actionable steps to improve child outcomes in QRIS systems? This workshop describes several states' kindergarten readiness assessment approaches, how they are analyzing results, applying findings and aligning with their QRIS efforts to inform a state strategy of differentiated supports to close the readiness gap.

122. Supporting Infant & Toddler Best Practices in QRIS

As QRIS develop and evolve around the nation, many systems are reflecting on how they are working for infants and toddlers, their caregivers, and families. The session will focus on how to identify currently existing QRIS elements that support infants and toddlers, as well as prioritize other elements to build stronger supports for this population who typically experience the lowest quality care.

126. QRIS Incentives and Program Quality: A Discussion of State Approaches and the Effectiveness of Incentives

States offer a variety of QRIS incentives – both financial and non-financial – but how do states determine what to offer and how to structure these incentive plans? This engaging session will provide an overview of the types of QRIS incentives currently used by states and will explore the impact of these incentives on providers, practitioners, and parents. We will discuss which supports or combinations of supports are most effective at improving and sustaining program quality, and also explore which supports provide the most cost-effective path to quality improvement. Representatives from a number of states will share their experiences and kick-off a group discussion as we engage in this important topic.

128. Family Child Care Networks in QRIS

The presentation will examine the community-based approaches that Oregon and Delaware have taken in establishing family child care networks as part of QRIS. Data on project effectiveness as well as a discussion of systems needs to support the application of content through on-site support and other QRIS mechanisms will be shared. Oregon's Equity Lens will also be examined and how the state is using family child care networks to allocate resources to create access to high quality child care as a means to close the opportunity gap.

131. The Five Essentials for Early Education (5E-Early Ed): A Framework and Surveys to Measure Organizational Supports Essential to Continuous Improvement

Learn about the 5E-Early Ed, a set of new surveys designed to collect educator and parent perspectives on the organizational conditions that support quality improvement in early education settings. Empirical findings linking strong organizational supports to improved child engagement and achievement will be reviewed. Sample survey items and pilot data will be explored. Discussion will focus on the importance and benefits of including organizational conditions in next generation QRIS frameworks.

138. Using a New Classroom Observation Measure to Quantify Students' Experiences

How do children really spend their day? What amounts of time are they engaged in literacy or in exploring scientific phenomenon or collaborating with peers? Presenters will guide participants through a classroom observation measure that quantifies how children spend their time in education and care settings and how to use the data as a catalyst for change in teaching practice.

140. Harnessing Parent Demand to Grow and Sustain QRIS Participation

Minnesota, Pennsylvania and South Carolina will share their strategies to engage families through QRIS including use of a quality-focused online search tool, an interactive web-based tool to help families make good choices and a statewide consumer awareness campaign. Presenters will also discuss common challenges that prevent states from communicating with parents effectively.

142. Elevating QRIS Communications: How to Improve Outreach and Engagement to Providers, Parents, Policymakers, and the Public

Hear the results of a new Child Trends evaluation of QRIS communication programs in more than a dozen states. Learn what communication messages, strategies, and tactics have been most effective and those that have not worked. Find out how to use new media to reach younger parent audiences and increase awareness of state rating systems. See examples of promotional materials and websites being used across the country by different state and early childhood advocacy groups.

148. Developing Systems for Assessing Quality: Maintaining Reliability and Integrity

What considerations are necessary to maintain the reliability and integrity of assessment measures in QRIS? What protocols does research suggest when using quality assessments and why do they matter? What steps can be taken to ensure that validity is maintained? This session will address these questions, providing examples from research and current QRIS and allowing time for participants to share their experiences.

149. Supporting Families and Building Protective Factors through QRIS

Recent research clearly indicates that the more families are engaged in their children's early development the better the outcomes. Learn how Kentucky plans to broadly integrate the Strengthening Families framework in a comprehensive system of supports that will help build protective factors for families and improve kindergarten readiness, including integration in the redesigned QRIS.

151. How to include family child care? Promising practices for engaging family child care providers in quality improvement systems

This session will examine strategies for engaging family child care providers in QRIS and equip participants with tools to succeed in improving quality of family child care providers in their state. Participants will hear the latest research findings in regard to family child care participation and learn about proven strategies for how best to both engage their participation and improve quality.

158. Mindfulness in the Face of Complexity: Opportunities to Strengthen and Simplify QRIS Standards and Monitoring Practices

This highly interactive session will provide key considerations and practice examples that will help states to be mindful in the development of a QRIS that strengthens - and at the same time simplifies - standards and related monitoring practices.

160. Developing and Using a Child Care Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework to Create a Professional Development System

Hear from Maryland and Pennsylvania leaders about the approach they have taken to professional development and how they have developed and integrated workforce and professional development registries into a comprehensive approach to professional development.

163. Supporting Quality Infant/Toddler Care: What Works, Lessons Learned

Early learning systems building must include strategies specifically targeting the workforce caring for infants and toddlers if we expect a positive impact on the quality of those early experiences that matter so much. Join us to learn about strategies implemented in several states and discuss what challenges remain and considerations for the future.

165. Creating QRIS that Support Cultural and Pedagogical Differences

The field recognizes the importance of individualized approaches to care and education for children and families. Creating a QRIS that provides individualized technical assistance, observation and rating strategies based on differing pedagogies is critical to supporting an equitable early care and education system. Can QRIS be equal and equitable to the programs they serve? Are practices and perspectives supportive of family cultural practices? Individuals from Montessori and faith based communities will be sharing their perspectives.

167. Assessing What Teachers Need to Help Children Succeed

Features of early care and education workplace environments - what teachers need in addition to training and education to help children succeed - are routinely overlooked in quality improvement efforts. Yet, just as children's environments can support or impede their learning, work environments promote or hinder teachers' practice and development. Learn how SEQUAL, a tool to gather teaching staff perspectives about quality improvement, can be utilized to inform QRIS and decision-making to best deploy quality improvement resources.

170. Shifting Our Thinking - Lessons Learned

Through this presentation, participants will be informed about the "shift in thinking" that has occurred over the past five years of QRIS implementation in Arizona, Miami/Dade County, Florida and Palm Springs, California. Learn about their continuous quality improvement journey!

176. Shared Services: Building Quality, Leadership and Management Capacity in Early Care and Education

Shared Services is a powerful strategy to build pedagogical and business capacity. In a Shared Services Alliance, networks of centers and/or homes attain the economies of scale and economies of specialization needed to deliver quality, sustainable child outcomes. This session will illustrate a range of Shared Services approaches and provide concrete examples of how some Alliances have "taken quality to scale" to support teachers, children and families.

182. Embedding Cultural Competence in QRIS: A Roundtable Discussion

Please join colleagues from across the nation for a roundtable discussion about embedding cultural competence in QRIS. Topics will include program requirements (and possible conflict resolution with developmentally appropriate practice); professional development and technical assistance requirements and supports at different levels of the system; and tools or mechanisms used to measure cultural competence in early care and education programs.

183. Reaching for Higher Ground through Advancements in Assessing Learning Environment: Transitioning from ECERS-R to ECERS-3 within an Established QRIS

The Environment Rating Scales are currently used in the vast majority of statewide QRIS programs. What impact will the release of the new ECERS-3 have on provider ratings, standards/cut points training, technical assistance, and professional development? Pennsylvania leaders are currently planning for this transition, having worked with researchers in conducting comparability studies to help determine the impact on their system and requirements for moving forward.

185. Inclusive Practices in QRIS: What Have We Learned a Year Later?

High quality early childhood programs have the capacity to serve children with diverse learning needs, including children with disabilities. This session will provide an overview of trends and state practices that address system components designed to improve program capacity for early childhood inclusion. California and Idaho will share professional development strategies and address barriers to implementation and lessons learned. A compilation of state and national professional development resources will be shared.

201. Multiple Perspectives on Access to High Quality Early Care and Education

Access to high quality programs is a key goal of the recently reauthorized CCDF. This plenary session will examine access from three perspectives: what we know about families, what we know about program participation in QRIS, and what we know about different data options for measuring and tracking access. These three perspectives will be used to encourage innovations in how state QRIS are planning for and tracking the results of their efforts to improve access to high quality early care and education for all families.

204. Unpacking the Quality Improvement Box: Using Data on Technical Assistance to Strengthen Impact

This workshop will explore how key QRIS policy and implementation questions related to quality improvement goals and activities can be addressed with data collected through the technical assistance process. Participants will learn about resources for prioritizing the kinds of data they collect and identifying data elements, including the INQUIRE Data Tool Kit. Drawing on these resources, they will participate in facilitated discussions concerning major questions about technical assistance and quality improvement, and approaches to collecting and using technical assistance data to strengthen QRIS impacts.

213. Scaling Successful Museum and Library Early Learning Partnerships in Your Community

Since 2012, IMLS has funded more than \$8 million in early learning projects nationwide. This panel will share promising practices and resources, with a focus on how state and local childhood education and social service providers can leverage partnerships with their local museums and libraries and develop a framework for aligning museum and library programming with state early learning standards.

215. Three States: How We Design, Implement and Sustain Career Ladders for the Next Generation of Early Care and Education Professionals

Join this panel of leaders from three states for an interactive session as they discuss how they design, implement and sustain career ladders starting from the CDA credential to earning a degree within the context of early care and education credentialing and QRIS. The presenters will also address the challenges to higher education for early learning professionals as they climb the career ladder and how it impacts the delivery of program quality.

216. Analytics, Algorithms, Abstracts: Who Cares? Using Data-Informed Storytelling to Engage the Community

Organizations across the nation have used data to their benefit, but how do you use data to inform an exciting story that excites the community about the work of your QRIS? Whether you glaze over at the mention of “statistical significance” or you get excited to talk about data analysis techniques, this interactive workshop will help you use data to tell an exciting and engaging story.

223. Evaluating QRIS as a System Change

This session will address the challenging issue of evaluating a QRIS as an initiative designed to change a system. The presenter will introduce the types of questions that are asked when conducting a system evaluation and will discuss why traditional evaluation strategies don't work well for a system evaluation. What methods can be used? How is information from a system evaluation presented to key stakeholders and used to improve functioning of the system and the quality of services available to programs, families and children? The audience will engage in small group discussions to reflect on the presentation and apply the information to their own work.

224. Using Data to Support Quality Improvement at Scale

This session will focus on the use of data in quality improvement efforts across early care and education (ECE) settings. Delaware leaders will describe the technical assistance administrative data collected through the state's QRIS and how they have used the data to change practice. Georgia leaders will describe how their state pre-k program used data to modify their professional development for pre-k teachers, including sharing findings of a 3-year evaluation of CLASS-based professional development.

225. Access to Quality: How Can Local Communities and States Better Measure Access?

This session will describe analytical strategies that can be used to understand access to early care and education on a statewide level. Innovative analytical methods currently being used at the local level will be described followed by guidance on how to adapt those methods so that they are applicable for states as well. The strategies described in this session will address federal reporting requirements required of states and how to use those methods to make programmatic and policy changes to improve early care and education access.

226. Lessons Learned So Far From RTT-ELC Validation Studies

A panel of researchers will provide updates on validation studies in the RTT-ELC states and share lessons learned.

227. QRIS Conceptual Framework

This session will describe continued work to develop a full logic model/theory of change for QRIS that incorporates multiple outcomes and different levels (including children, workforce, families, and systems). The discussion will focus on identifying the QRIS activities that link to these outcomes and the important research questions that could be included in future evaluations to assess the new model. The session will be interactive and will invite audience participation during the presentation and through small group discussions.

228. What Are We Learning about Child Care in the US and What Are the Implications for QRIS?

The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) is a goldmine of new information about multiple facets of the early care and education landscape. This session will focus on the findings from the NSECE that are most critical for QRIS administrators and implementation teams including findings on centers, family child care, and the workforce. The presentation will be non-technical and designed to help participants make direct use of the data. Links will be shared to NSECE resources that can be used for non-technical audiences. The presentation will be interactive and allow for questions and discussion.

229. Overview of the Family Teacher Provider Relationships Questionnaire and the Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers

This session will describe two new FREE measures developed by the federal government: The Family Teacher Provider Relationships Questionnaire and the Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers.

230. Setting QRIS Participation Rates and Measuring Density of Program Participation: What Works?

This session will provide practical guidance on setting QRIS participation rates and measuring density of program participation. The presenters will share the results of a state case study on participation rates and provide simple templates that can be used to guide calculations of density. The session will encourage questions and interactions with the presenters.

231. Measuring Curriculum Implementation

QRIS are increasingly including indicators to tap the use of curriculum in early care and education programs. What are the challenges of documenting curriculum use in programs? What strategies are states using to verify curriculum use? What are the challenges of verifying curriculum and how have QRIS addressed them? The session will be interactive and encourage sharing of examples and experiences.

232. Strengthening Family Partnerships

This session will focus on measuring the quality of family-provider partnerships in the context of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). Drawing from findings from four research projects that have examined different aspects of this issue, the session will highlight opportunities and challenges for QRIS stakeholders in refining and developing QRIS indicators for family-provider partnerships and engagement.

233. Coaching and Quality Improvement: How Do Programs Change Over Time?

This presentation will describe the results of research in Indiana to track providers over time to understand their progress in the QRIS and changes in their perceptions and experiences. In addition to the discussion of the Indiana project, the presenters will encourage group discussion about the broad array of issues related to quality improvement.

236. Best in CLASS: Coaching Teachers on the CLASS Tool

When building QRISs, we must focus on high-quality coaching that promotes teacher growth and improves child outcomes. We'll examine a systematic approach that combines CLASS data with individualized professional development to improve teacher-child interactions. We'll review six principles to marry what we know works from research with classroom realities. Colleagues from a state-level implementation will discuss how they leveraged these strategies to deliver on the promise of CLASS.

237. Leveraging On-Line Learning for Quality Improvement

Ongoing quality improvement is an essential component of QRIS. This session will explore a number of new strategies to harness the web in support of ongoing improvement, with a special focus on workforce development. Four initiatives will be highlighted including the Federal Early Educator Central: The Pathway to Credentials and Degrees for Infant-Toddler Educators; Delaware's Early Learning Leadership Initiative; the Lastinger Center's Master Teacher Initiative; and New Mexico's Family Infant Toddler Early Intervention program. These initiatives leverage web-based learning platforms to advance credentials and degrees. These initiatives share a focus on supporting competency-based, effective practice for infant-toddler teachers; instructional leaders; and master teachers.

238. What Does Quality Early Care Look Like for Homeless and Other High-Needs Children?

Did you know that the person in the U.S. most likely to stay in a federally-funded homeless shelter is an infant under the age of one? Or that over 50% of sheltered homeless children are age five and under? Does your State's QRIS promote high quality standards and professional practices that effectively address the needs of each and every child? Are your State's early childhood policies aligned to provide full and easy access to high quality services and regular attendance for children experiencing homelessness and other trauma? How are your QRIS resources and technical assistance efforts addressing the vicarious trauma experienced by staff or facilitating partnerships to best engage each and every family? We will discuss actionable strategies and policies for developing an inclusive QRIS that supports and incentivizes the participation of children with high needs?

251. The Early Childhood Profession We All Want: Creating the System We Need

Increasing pressure is being placed on early childhood education programs to provide consistently high quality early learning experiences, while at the same time the value of our contribution to children's learning and development too often is undervalued. Structuring early childhood education as a professional field of practice is gaining momentum as a systemic solution. It offers a way for unifying the field around common purpose, addressing the field's uneven performance, and bringing increased recognition to the field's practitioners. What will be required for early childhood education to be recognized as a profession? What hard choices need to be addressed to achieve professional status and assure a professional workforce that is reflective of the diversity of the children we are serving? What core values are essential to early childhood education's identity as a profession? What role can and should state QRIS play to achieve these aspirations?

301. High Needs Children - How Are We Building a System of Systems to Meet Their Multiple Needs?

There is a lot of discussion around child outcomes and QRIS but the reality is that high quality early learning is only one component that is needed in assuring improved child outcomes. How are we doing in creating systems that link to the children at greatest risk? How are we linking high quality early learning to child welfare and housing, prioritizing children who are homeless and supporting families? How are we connecting together the pieces of the systems puzzle?

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