

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. Plenary Session: 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.

102. Plenary Session: 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.

103. Plenary Session: 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?

104. Plenary Session: 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?

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.

120. Acting on Early Childhood Assessment Results to Improve Child Outcomes

How can a state translate kindergarten readiness assessments and other outcome studies into actionable steps to improve child outcomes in QRIS systems? This workshop describes several states' measurement 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.

128. Strategies for Supporting Family Child Care Providers through Coordinated Professional Development and Targeted Technical Assistance

This session will present how two states are targeting efforts to meet the QRIS quality improvement needs of family child care providers using relationship-based strategies and techniques. Delaware will share how they are using targeted professional development (with a focus on language and literacy) delivered in a community-of-practice model to support family child care providers. Oregon will share their approach in creating focused child care networks to increase the supply of quality child care within communities that have been traditionally underserved to help close the achievement 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.

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.

169. 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.

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 and Miami/Dade County and Palm Beach County, Florida. Learn about their continuous quality improvement journey!

175. Assessment and Data as Components of Continuous Quality Improvement

As part of QRIS, both Michigan (Great Start to Quality) and the District of Columbia (Going for the GOLD), rate the quality of early childhood settings using a common set of standards and assessment tools that are aligned with each state's standards of quality. During this session, both states will share how the data generated through the use of quality assessment measures, the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) in Michigan and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) in the District of Columbia, are used to inform continuous quality improvement at the multiple levels.

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.

177. Infant/Toddler Quality Indicators and the Workforce: Exploring What Works, Lessons Learned, Questions and Concerns, and Related Resources

Discuss ways QRIS can and do focus on the unique needs of infants and toddlers. Hear about national trends, assessment tools, and new resources that target critical competencies for infant toddler educators, especially those serving children from high needs populations. Discuss strategies implemented in North Carolina since 2004, including those from the recent Early Learning Challenge Grant activities. Share and explore your successes, remaining challenges, and considerations for the future.

178. Leveraging NAEYC Accreditation to Sustain and Scale-up QRIS

Uneven funding, political shifts, and fragile infrastructures are threats to sustaining and expanding QRIS systems. NAEYC's accreditation system for programs serving young children exists in every state and can be leveraged to sustain and scale-up QRISs. Using established, reliable processes for measuring and building quality, NAEYC accreditation aligns with the goals of QRIS. This session highlights examples and benefits of leveraging the NAEYC accreditation system.

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. A Shared Vision for an Inclusive Future: Inclusive Practices in QRIS

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, Idaho, and Illinois leaders will highlight their efforts to improve program capacity for early childhood inclusion. Professional development strategies, program and professional recognition approaches, assessment of inclusive practices using the new Inclusive Classroom Profile, along with barriers to implementation and lessons learned, will be shared. A compilation of state and national professional development resources will be provided.

188. State-Funded Preschool Programs in QRIS – Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies (How to Train Your Dragon)

This session will focus on issues, challenges and successful strategies related to participation of state-funded preschool programs in a statewide QRIS.

192. Viewing Communities of Practice as a Way to Empower Program Leaders to Effect Change, Promote Continuous Program Improvement, and QRIS Sustainability

To effect lasting change, leaders must guide their programs through a series of small changes that often begin with understanding the need for change. This will often require intensive support from early care and education consultants. During this session, we will explore how developing Communities of Practice can be used as an efficient and effective strategy to promote continuous program improvement and QRIS sustainability beyond the program's participation in on-site services.

194. Quality Costs How Much?! The Endless Possibilities of the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator and How One State Used It to Change Policy

As states and territories think about how to ensure that families receive consistent high quality care, many are beginning to model the cost of such care. In this engaging and interactive session, you will learn about how one state used the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (PCQC) - a tool from the Office of Child Care that helps policy makers model the cost of operating high quality child care programs - as part of a collaborative process aimed at improving child care assistance and QRIS policies. State leaders will share their perspective on the policy changes they were able to recommend and implement as a result of using the PCQC. Bring your laptop or tablet if you want to use the PCQC during the session, with technical experts available to assist you.

198. Policy Alignment: Two Approaches to Identifying Early Care and Education Policy that Supports an Accessible and Successful QRIS

State policies aligned with a QRIS are key to a successful implementation that will ensure critical objectives are met, such as providing families, particularly those in high risk populations, better access to quality programs. Two approaches to aligning a state's early care and education policies to work in conjunction with QRIS and its program quality improvement initiatives will be discussed with two states presenting examples of revisions to their state policies and processes.

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.

208. 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.

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

Since 2012, the Institute for Museum and Library Services 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.

220. Recalibrating Quality Improvement: Who is in the Driver's Seat?

How can our QRIS initiatives move beyond quality for a day and support meaningful, sustainable quality improvements? This session will explore the debate between compliance and innovation. Is there a way to provide both in QRIS? We believe there are continuous quality improvement strategies that promote reflective teaching and not just “rule following” to achieve a high score on an assessment.

221. New Mexico's FOCUS QRIS + CQI = A Culture for Purposeful Change

Continuous quality improvement and program leadership development are critical components to New Mexico's FOCUS QRIS. FOCUS provides programs with research-based essential elements of quality and criteria of a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process that promotes quality practices. This effort is dependent upon the active inclusion of participation of staff at all levels of creating a culture of CQI at the program, sector and state levels and intentional supports and training for each level. Learn how this work is progressing and what is making a difference.

223. Using Data to Support Quality Improvement at Scale

This session will focus on the use of data in statewide quality improvement efforts, highlighting two examples. One example demonstrates how technical assistance (TA) administrative data collected through Delaware's QRIS has changed TA practice. The second example demonstrates how Georgia has used data to modify its professional development for pre-k teachers.

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

In this session, presenters will describe methods that can be used to understand access to early care and education at both the local and state levels. They will discuss innovative analytical methods currently being used to measure access at the local level and will then offer guidance to adapt the methods to measure access statewide. Session presenters will discuss the federal reporting requirements related to access issues and facilitate a discussion about how these methods can support program and policy changes to improve access to high-quality early care and education.

225. Lessons Learned From RTT-ELC Validation Studies

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

226. Planning for the Next Generation of QRIS: Developing a Complete 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, programs, 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.

227. Using New National Early Care and Education Data to Support Design, Planning and Implementation of 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. 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.

228. Two New Measures: An 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. Presenters will also offer ideas for how to use the measures in a QRIS context.

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

This session will provide practical guidance on setting QRIS participation rates, measuring density of program participation and reporting information to stakeholders. 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 and the use of density data to guide planning and implementation. The session will encourage questions and interactions with the presenters.

231. Measuring Curriculum Implementation in QRIS

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. Family Counts: Strengthening Family Partnerships with QRIS

This session will focus on measuring the quality of family-provider partnerships in the context of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. 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 Does Program Quality 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.

234. Moving Toward a More Aligned and Coordinated Monitoring System

This session will present a framework for a more aligned and coordinated approach to monitoring across multiple early care and education programs and provide an opportunity for a whole-group discussion about aligning monitoring systems. Two states, Ohio and Rhode Island, will share their experiences to align and coordinate monitoring.

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?

240. National Resources and State Examples to Support Early Learning Sustainability Planning

Learn about a library of QRIS-related sustainability resources that has been created as part of the RTT-ELC technical assistance initiative. Promising state sustainability efforts will be shared during an interactive discussion with participants.

301. You've Observed Classrooms using the CLASS Measure: Now What? *Featured Sponsor Presentation*

Join Teachstone as we present a systematic, research-based approach to improving classroom interactions and ultimately, delivering on the promise of CLASS - achieving better outcomes for children. In this presentation, you'll learn how to move beyond providing one-size-fits-all professional development to utilizing a data-driven model of individualized learning and coaching. This presentation includes a live demonstration of *myTeachstone*, an online subscription service that simplifies CLASS implementation for administrators, observers, coaches, and teachers.

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