

Technical Assistance

This fact sheet is one in a series about the state of quality initiatives in the United States. As of 2019, there are 44 fully operational quality rating and improvement systems (QRISs) in the United States.¹ Data are from the Quality Compendium, a catalog of the QRISs operating in the United States as of December 31, 2019.

Technical Assistance Fact Sheet, 2019

Technical assistance (TA) in state QRISs and quality initiatives supports the reflective processes that professionals need to translate the theories and information learned through education and training into best practices.²

This fact sheet provides a descriptive analysis of data from the Quality Compendium about how TA is carried out across QRISs operating in the United States. It includes information about the following:

- ◆ Types and focus areas of TA
- ◆ Number and types of TA providers delivering services for QRISs
- ◆ Processes for providing TA

This fact sheet also includes information on the delivery of TA, shows whether standardized processes are used, provides details on the dosage of onsite support, and identifies whether QRISs measure the effectiveness of TA.

Types of Technical Assistance

All 44 QRISs provide TA to participating programs, but the extent and types of TA vary between systems. The type of TA includes the method or model for how TA is delivered to early childhood education (ECE) programs. TA types include the following:

- ◆ Mentoring—a relationship-based process between colleagues
- ◆ Coaching—a relationship-based process led by an expert
- ◆ Consultation—a collaborative, problem-solving process with an external consultant

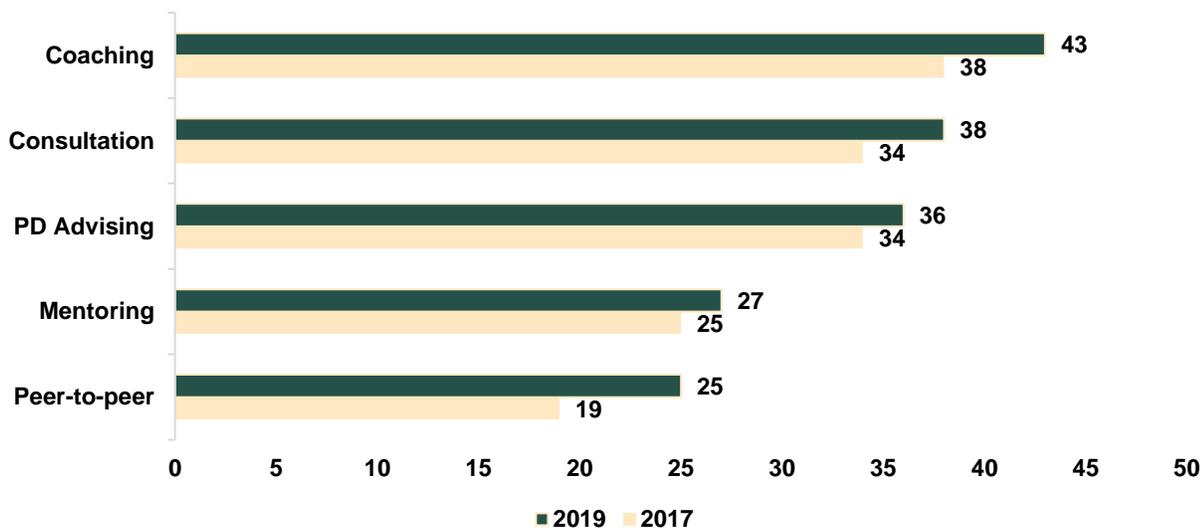
¹ Forty-one states and DC have a QRIS or quality initiative (AK, AR, AZ, CA, CO, DE, FL [three localities], GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WA, and WI). While most QRISs operate at the state level, three represent separate counties in Florida (Duval, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach). California's QRIS, while represented in the Quality Compendium as one system, is carried out at the county level and does not include all counties in the state. For consistency across previous fact sheets, we use the term QRIS to include all quality initiatives with a profile in the Quality Compendium.

² National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) & National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). (2011). *Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary*. https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/glossarytraining_ta.pdf

- ◆ Professional development (PD) advising—a one-on-one process in which an advisor offers PD guidance
- ◆ Peer-to-peer—the development of relationship-based learning and support that creates communities among colleagues

Most QRISs (95 percent) report providing more than one type of TA. Figure 1 shows the number of QRISs providing the most common types of TA. Peer-to-peer TA has seen the most growth since 2017 but remains the least common form of TA reported among QRISs. All types of TA have become more popular since 2017, but coaching remains the most predominant.

Figure 1. Number of QRISs Providing Certain Types of TA, 2019



Source: BUILD Initiative, & Child Trends. (2019). A catalog and comparison of quality initiatives [Data system]. Retrieved on January 20, 2020, from <http://qualitycompendium.org/>

Notes: N = 44 QRISs. Respondents could indicate that the QRIS includes multiple types of TA.

Technical Assistance Focus

TA focus areas are the content provided to ECE programs across all TA types. Most QRISs (95 percent) provide TA on multiple focus areas. The most common TA focus areas reported are listed below (also see figure 2):

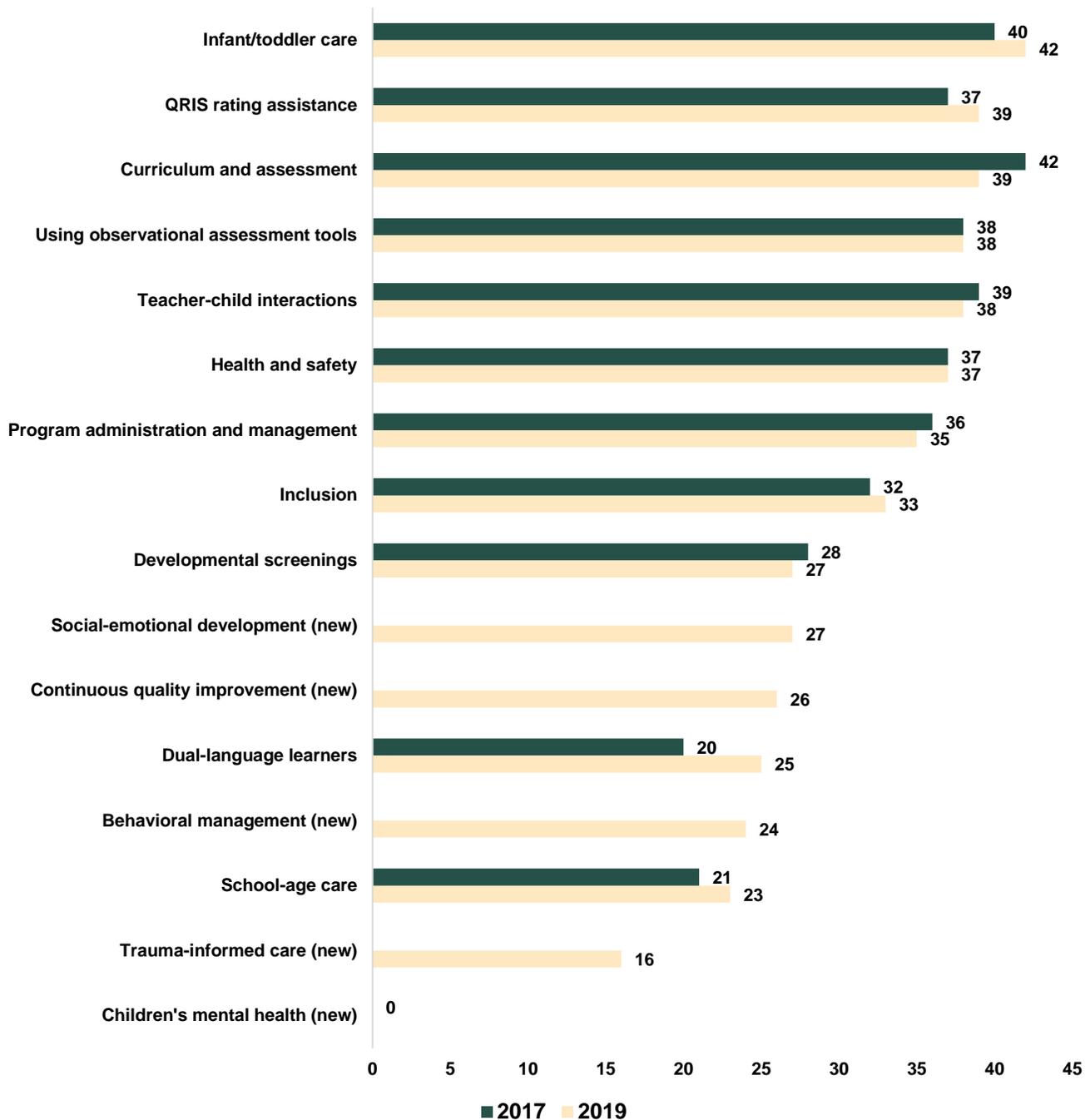
- ◆ Infant/toddler care (42 QRISs, 95 percent)
- ◆ QRIS rating assistance (39 QRISs, 89 percent)
- ◆ Curriculum and assessment (39 QRISs, 89 percent)

Since 2017, there has been a decrease in the number of QRISs that focus on curriculum and assessment, improving teacher-child interactions, developing program administration and management practices, and understanding and using developmental screenings.

The number of QRISs focusing on infant/toddler care, QRIS rating assistance, inclusion, school-age care, and dual-language learners increased since 2017. The TA focus area that showed the most growth since 2017 is TA for dual-language learners.

Social-emotional development, continuous quality improvement, behavioral management, trauma-informed care, and children’s mental health are new TA focus areas reported in the 2019 Quality Compendium.

Figure 2. Number of QRISs Focusing on Certain Types of TA, 2019



Source: BUILD Initiative, & Child Trends. (2019). A catalog and comparison of quality initiatives [Data system]. Retrieved on January 20, 2020, from <http://qualitycompendium.org/>

Notes: N = 44 QRISs. Some are in multiple categories.

Technical Assistance Process

Thirty-two QRISs (74 percent) require TA providers to follow a standardized process or model when they provide TA.³ QRIS TA models often have guidelines for the amount of TA time that programs will receive and the length of time the TA will last. Nine QRISs (20 percent) note that they have more than one TA process to accommodate programs’ needs.

In 2019, 6 QRISs (14 percent) reported models in which TA is provided for more than 6 months, while no QRISs have TA models lasting fewer than 6 months. Thirty-seven QRISs (84 percent) reported models in which the duration of TA provided varies in some way.

Of these, seven QRISs (19 percent) have models in which the duration of TA provided varies based on program type, and ten QRISs (27 percent) have models in which the duration of TA provided varies based on an initial assessment of program quality. In five QRISs (11 percent), other methods are used for determining how long TA lasts.

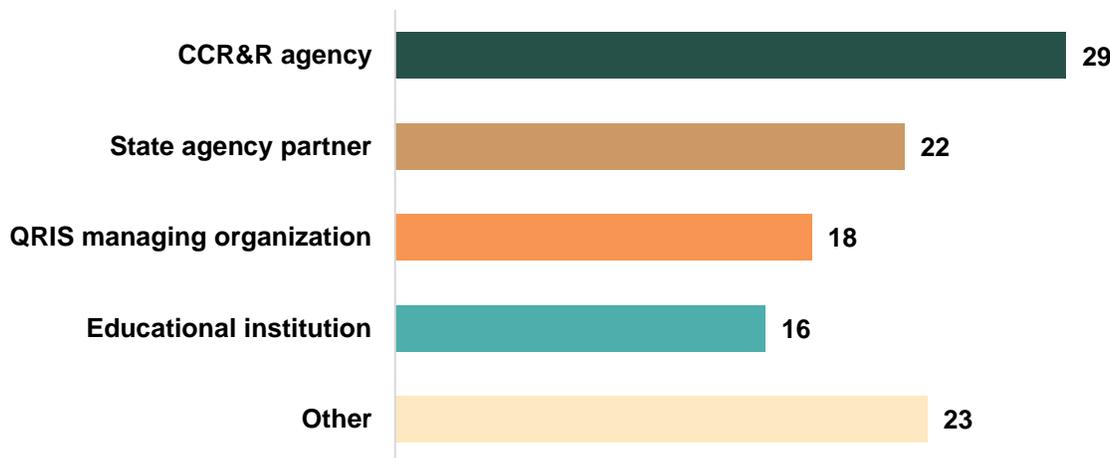
Technical Assistance Providers

There are several entities that provide TA, including child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies, state agency partners, QRIS managing organizations, and educational institutions (for example, community colleges and universities). Most QRISs (80 percent) have more than one entity providing TA.

Figure 3 shows that CCR&R agencies are the most common entities providing TA in 2019 (66 percent). Many QRISs that selected “other” included descriptions of a local system or external contractor that allocates or provides TA as needed.

Since 2017, there has been a slight increase in the number of QRISs that report TA provided by each type of organization. Notably, the number of QRISs that report providing TA through QRIS managing organizations increased from 12 in 2017 to 18 in 2019.

Figure 3. Number of Organizations Providing TA, 2019



Source: BUILD Initiative, & Child Trends. (2019). A catalog and comparison of quality initiatives [Data system]. Retrieved on January 20, 2020, from <http://qualitycompendium.org/>

Notes: N = 44 QRISs. Some are in multiple categories.

³ Forty-three QRISs reported this information.

Across QRISs, the individuals providing TA have different titles. Most are referred to as consultants or coaches, and some are called specialists or advisors. The total number of TA providers across QRISs ranges from 4 (Rhode Island) to 387 (Washington), with a median of 41.5 TA providers. Thirty-four QRISs (77 percent) require preparation such as training or certification before TA providers can begin working with programs.

Effectiveness of Technical Assistance

In 2019, QRISs were asked to report whether there is an effort to measure the effectiveness of TA provided to participating programs. Of the 41 QRISs that reported this information, 25 (61 percent) indicate that they have some means of measuring the effectiveness of TA that is provided.

Examples of measurement strategies include the following:

- ◆ Using data from observational tools such as Environment Rating Scales or the Classroom Assessment Scoring System
- ◆ Comparing the amount of TA provided to improvements in quality ratings
- ◆ Collecting frequency, duration, and content information through CCR&R agencies, among others

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center) supports state and community leaders and their partners in the planning and implementation of rigorous approaches to quality in all early care and education settings for children from birth to school age. The ECQA Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

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