



**State and Territory CCDF Administrators Meeting**  
August 7–9, 2018 • Crystal Gateway Marriott • Arlington, Virginia

# **Sustaining Quality Improvement at all Levels of the Early Learning System**

# Agenda

- Welcome
- CQI – the basics
- Culture of Continuous Learning Project
- CA Early Learning System CQI
- Wrap Up

# Definition: CQI Is ...

- **Continuous:** Part of the job; no end point
- Owned by the team in a program
- Proactive, not reactive
- A **reflective, cyclical, and data-informed** process

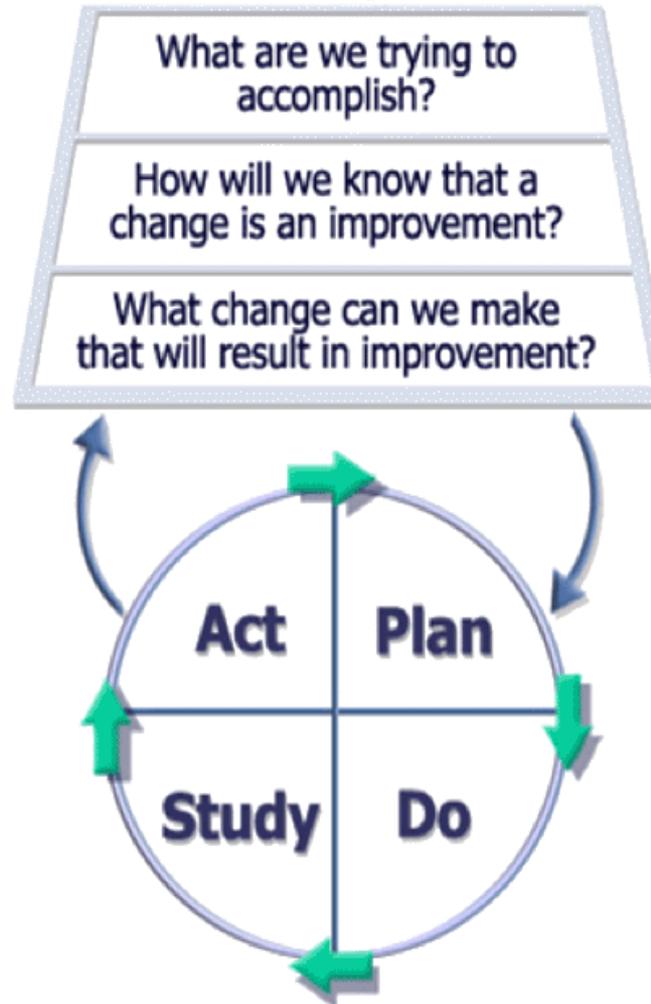
# Definition: CQI Is ...

A management process and ongoing practice to improve internal work processes and increase program quality. It is proactive, not reactive.

It goes beyond external compliance – and moves the lever for change internally. It involves the internal “owning” of the process by the program team.

Improvement processes involve using data to generate change ideas and testing these ideas through a structured iterative learning cycle (such as Plan, Do, Study, Act).

## Model for Improvement



Based on a shared vision of quality:

- Identify general goals and select team
- Analyze current condition using data
- Propose experiment; make plan
- Decide on measures of success

- Build staff capacity and carry out the plan
- Collect documentation and data

Plan

Do

Act

Study

- Adopt, modify, or abandon these practices
- Determine what more needs to be done and learned
- Set up next round

- Share and analyze impact, track results
- Consider adjustments
- Celebrate learning & successes

# Building a Learning Organization

“The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization.”

Senge, P. M. (2006). *p.4*

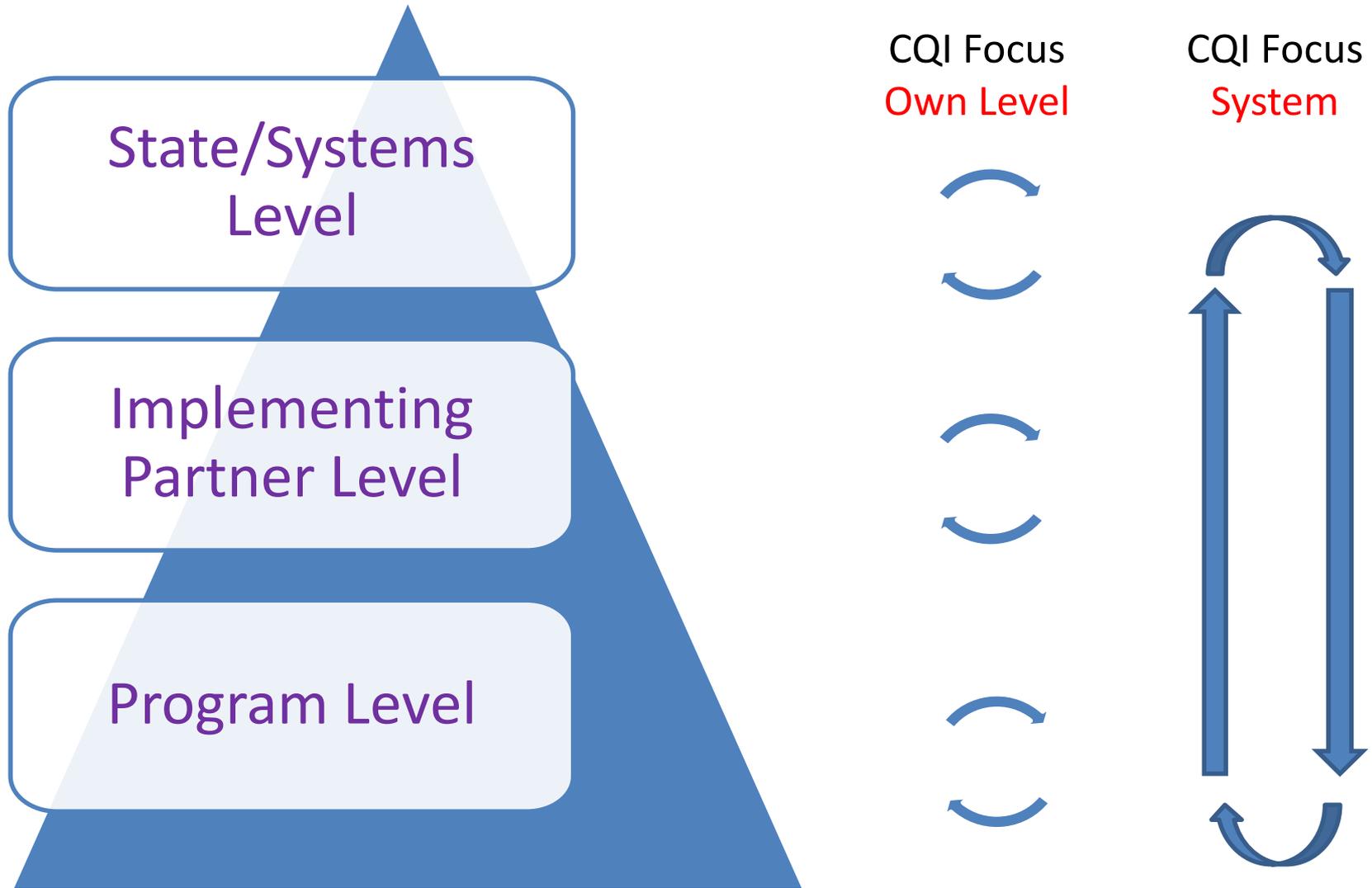


# Continuous Quality Improvement

- **CQI applies to three levels and different strategies are used at each level.**
  - **Program level** - program staff and leadership
  - **Implementing partner level** - professional development and technical assistance practitioners
  - **The state system level** - state agencies, statewide organizations, policymakers, private funders, and contracting entities



# QRIS: Three 3 Levels of Work



# Talk at the table...

- What intentional strategies or activities has your state taken to support a basic understanding of CQI principles, including using sources of evidence, data, and the CQI process? (select one area)
  - For directors/programs
  - For TA/coaches/navigators and implementing partners (CCRR etc.)
  - For state level work





**Culture of Continuous Learning Project:  
A Breakthrough Series Collaborative for  
Improving Child Care and Head Start Quality**



**Culture of Continuous  
Learning Project**

# PARTNERS



INSTITUTE FOR EARLY EDUCATION  
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Policy

# THE CHALLENGE OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN ECE

- Practice change is difficult to support in classrooms and family child care homes
- Evidence-based practices are challenging to add to existing programs
- Organizational capacity and structures to support practice change may not be in place
- When improvements are made, they are difficult to sustain

# CONTEXT OF THE CCL PROJECT

- Improvement methods that focus on promoting sustained organizational change hold promise for early care and education programs (ECE)
- Traditional quality improvement strategies in ECE target pieces but not the whole “system” in a program
- With limited resources, it is important to understand which improvement methods are most effective in ECE programs

# PURPOSE OF THE CCL PROJECT

- **Implement a Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) in Head Start and child care settings**
- **Assess the feasibility of implementing continuous quality improvement methods focused on promoting and sustaining change across an organization**

# HOW WILL RESULTS INFORM THE ECE FIELD?

- Provide clarity about the process and expected outcomes of quality improvement models
- Identify the supports needed to implement a quality improvement model in ECE programs at all levels – teacher, classroom and program
- Offer recommendations for measuring and evaluating quality improvement models



# Overview of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative Methodology

# **The Breakthrough Series**

**Collaborative aims to bridge the gap between what practitioners know and what practitioners do.**

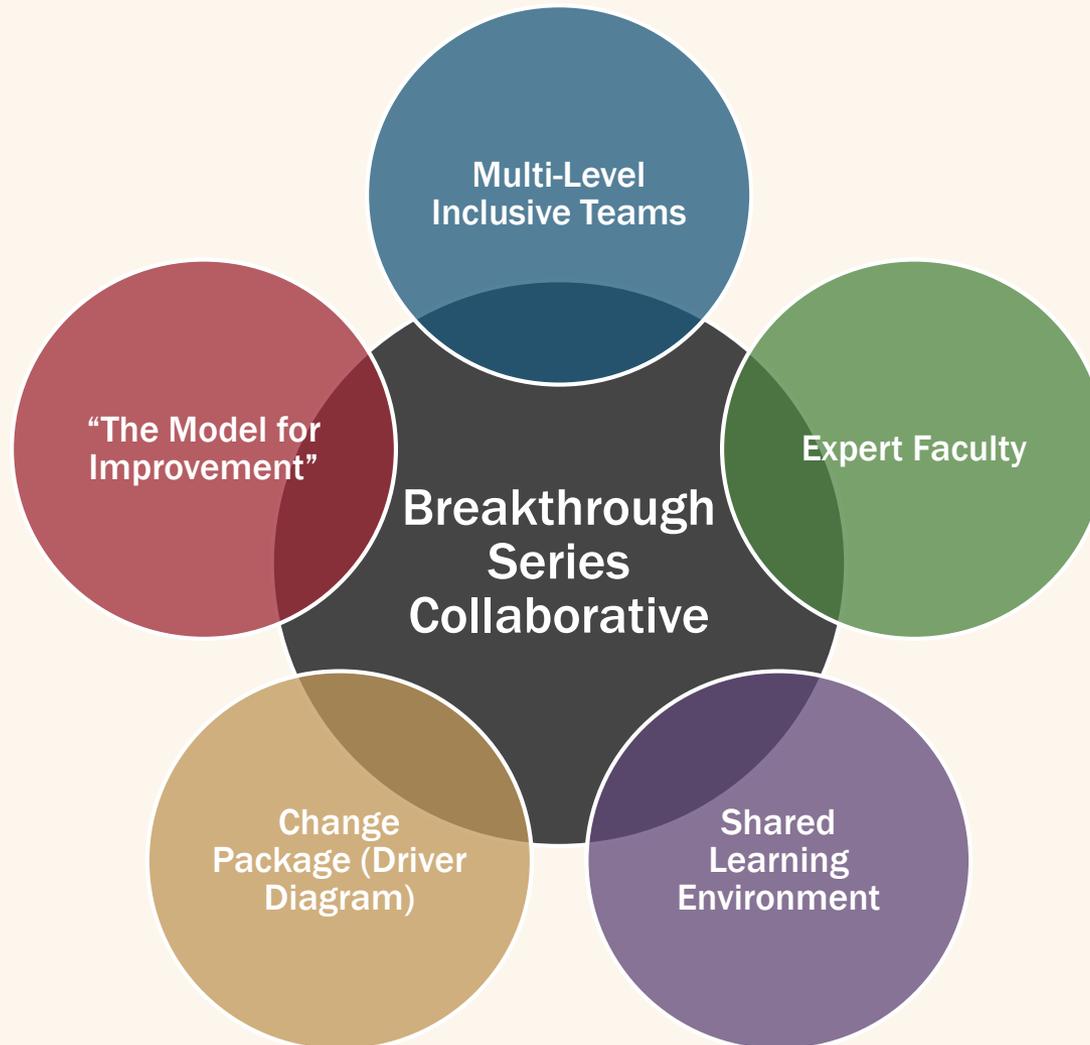
# THE BREAKTHROUGH SERIES COLLABORATIVE

- **Addresses organizational and systems barriers**
- **Engages frontline leadership**
- **Shifts power dynamics and the locus of control for driving change**
- **Builds capacity for organizational improvement**

# 4 STEPS TO SYSTEMS CHANGE

- **Test**
- **Implement**
- **Spread**
- **Sustain**

# FIVE KEY ELEMENTS OF A BSC



# CONTENT SELECTED FOR THE BSC: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

- **Two overarching aims: increase positive social behavior in young children and reduce challenging behaviors**
- **SEL has well-established and evidence-based teaching practices**
- **SEL is an area in which instructional quality can be improved and teachers express interest in additional supports**

# OVERARCHING AIMS DEVELOPED FOR THE CCL BSC

- **Increase the number of classrooms that show improvement in providing high quality, SEL environments**
- **Increase children's social and emotional competence**
- **Reduce challenging behaviors**

## Relationships and Environments

- Design classrooms in responsive ways
- Develop and maintain predictable schedules, routines and activities to promote smooth transitions
- Design activities to promote engagement
- Provide directions
- Teach behavior expectations
- Teachers develop nurturing, meaningful relationships with children and colleagues

## Social Skills and Emotional Competencies

- Teach children to express emotions appropriately
- Teach children problem solving skills
- Teach children positive peer relationship skills
- Encourages children's autonomy
- Embed opportunities for children to practice skills in daily routines and interactions
- Use effective strategies to respond to challenging behaviors

## Family Partnership

- Use open, consistent communication with families
- Invite and support parent participation in the classroom and center
- Develop positive, respectful, meaningful, culturally affirming relationships with families
- Connect families to concrete supports in times of need
- Collaborate with families to support the parent-child relationship and the families' promotion of their child's social and emotional competencies
- Support/promote parent confidence/competence (parental resilience)

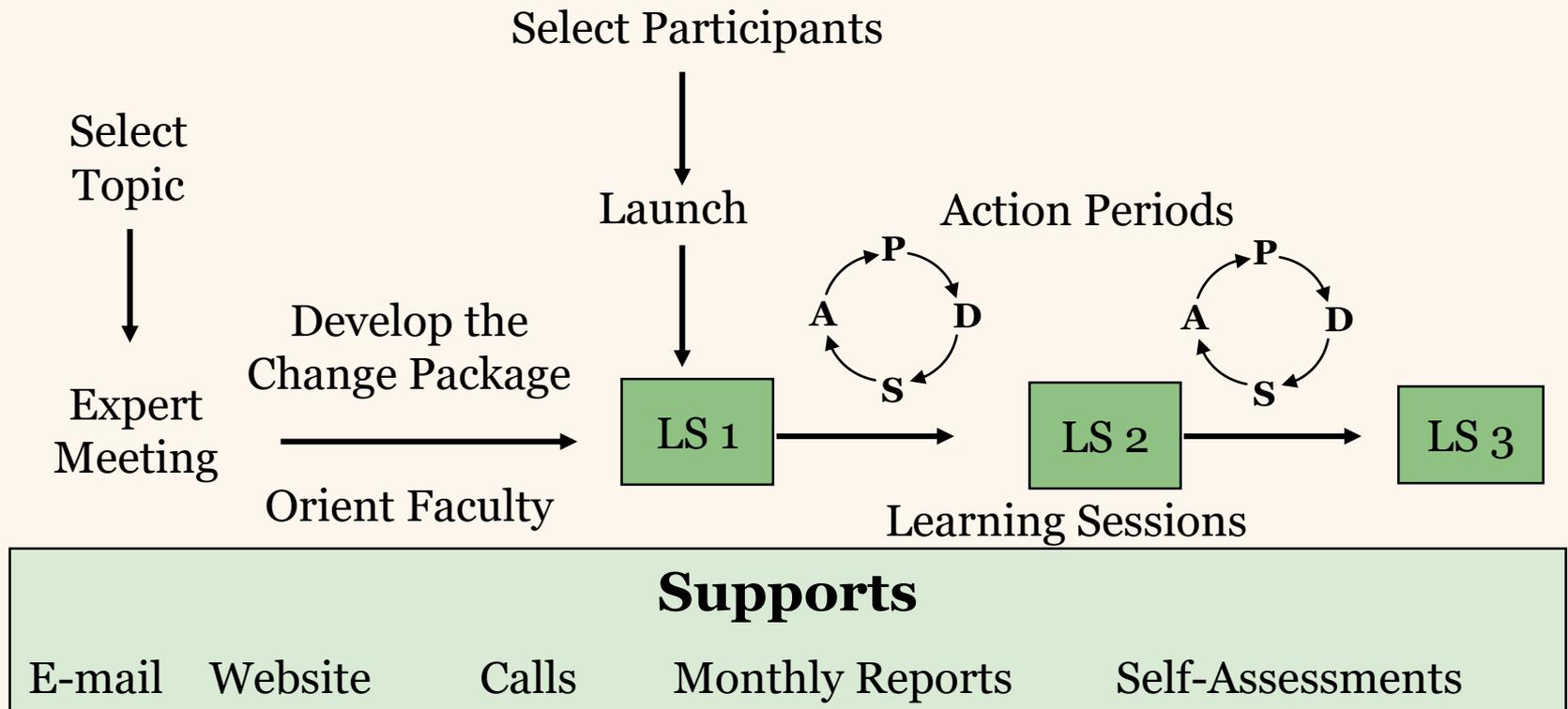
## Racial Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

- Have and use a system to collect and review data by race/ethnicity, language, gender, and ability
- Provide ongoing professional development and reflection opportunities for staff on cultural responsiveness, implicit bias, and race equity
- Honor and reflect diverse identities and families in the classroom and center environment
- Develop clear policies and guidelines for preventing challenging behaviors that are free from bias, and ensure equity and fairness

## Organizational Capacity and Support

- Create a culture of collaboration in the classroom and center
- Use facilitative leadership and reflective supervision
- Support healthy staff, stress-reduction, adult relational competencies, self-regulation
- Use data systems to track behavior and social and emotional competence
- Ensure access to mental health consultation
- Maintain effective staffing patterns
- Nurture a positive workplace climate where staff feel supported and valued
- Provide ongoing training and coaching

# THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS



# WHAT DO TEAMS DO AT LEARNING SESSIONS?

Create shared language, vision, and priorities

Develop sense of team

Discuss ideas

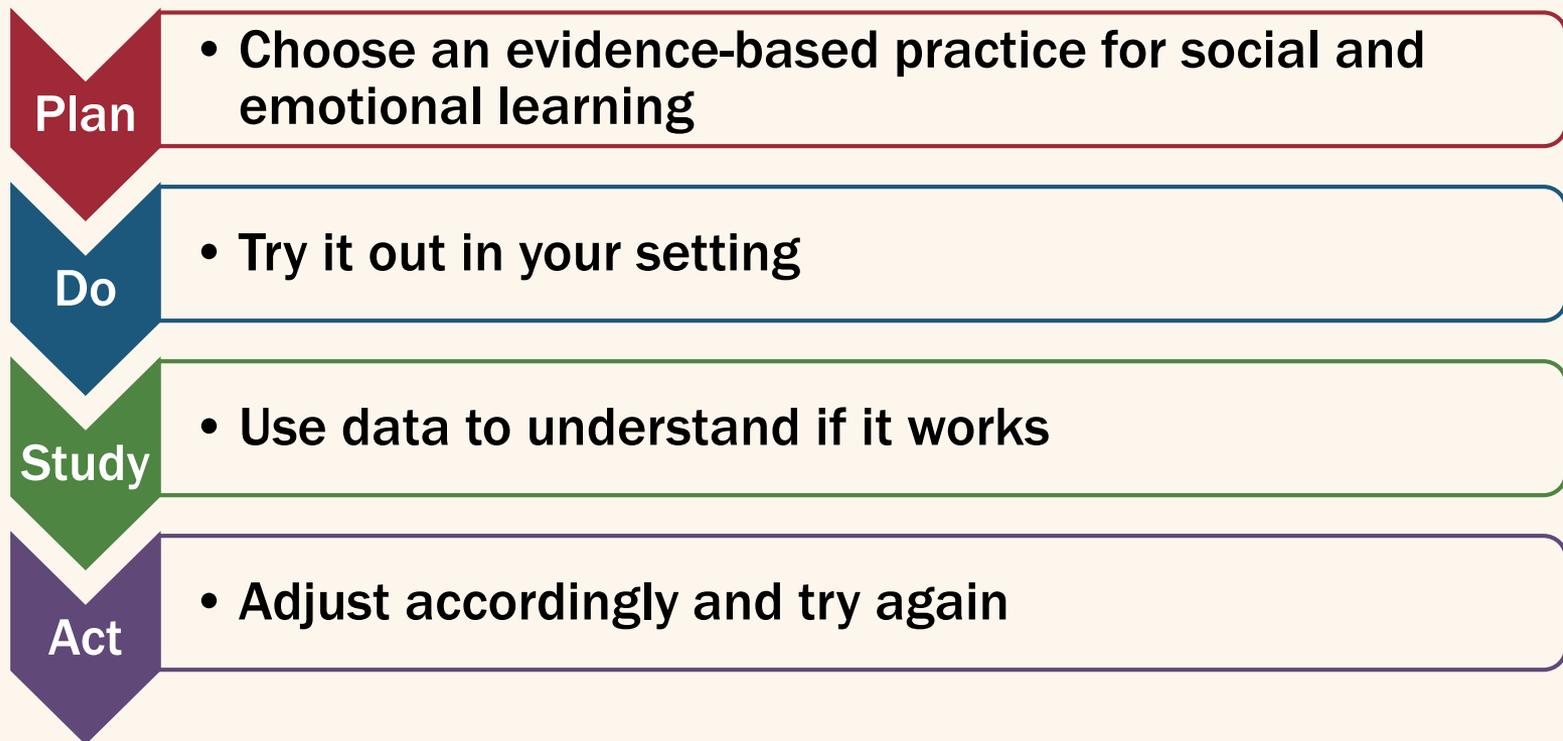
Develop networks across teams

Spread successes

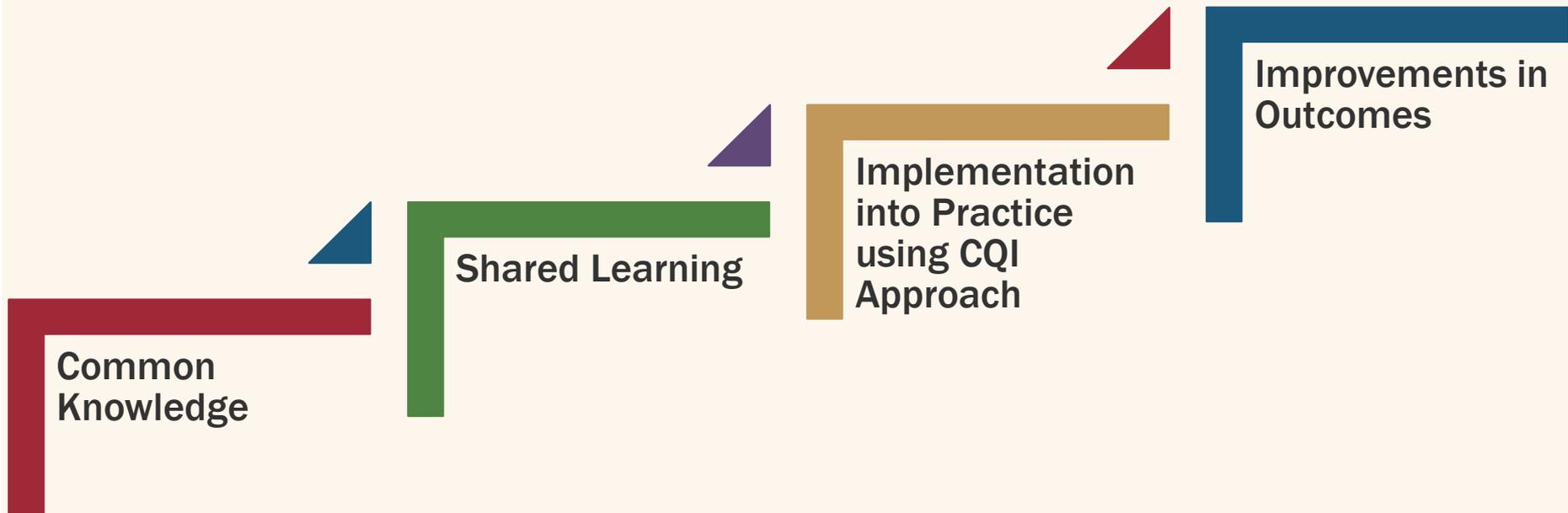
Become leaders in this work

# WHAT DO TEAMS DO DURING THE ACTION PERIODS?

Test ideas using PDSA cycles; collect data; communicate within and across teams



# A TRUE COLLABORATIVE...



# FEASIBILITY STUDY AIMS

- **Assess the feasibility of implementing a collaborative quality improvement strategy in child care and Head Start settings**
- **Examine the feasibility of achieving meaningful and measurable **outcomes** for individuals and organizations**
- **Shape recommendations for implementation and evaluation of an expanded BSC**

# SAMPLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

## Implementation:

1. How do participants experience the BSC?
2. What staff qualifications and skills were best aligned with BSC activities and goals?
3. What are the costs of implementing the BSC in early care and education settings?

## Outcomes:

1. In what ways do participants change their beliefs, knowledge, practice, and perceptions as a result of participating in the BSC?
2. In what ways do programs change their culture as a result of the BSC?
3. How and to what extent do quality improvements spread within ECE programs and systems, beyond just the participants in the BSC team?

# PROJECT TIMELINE

- Literature review
  - *Published January 2018*
- Implement the BSC
  - *June 2018– July 2019*
- Final report
  - *Early 2020*
- [Project Website](#)

Culture of Continuous Learning Project:  
A Literature Review of the Breakthrough  
Series Collaborative (BSC)



January 2018 | OPRE Report #2018-28



# THANK YOU!

**For more information:**

**Nina Hetzner, OPRE [Nina.Hetzner@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Nina.Hetzner@acf.hhs.gov)**

**Kathryn Tout and Tamara Halle, Child Trends  
[ktout@childtrends.org](mailto:ktout@childtrends.org), [thalle@childtrends.org](mailto:thalle@childtrends.org)**

# Talk at the table...

- A challenge with “intensive” CQI models implemented in early learning programs could be a “limited capacity” of the programs to engage. Brainstorm structures your state has (or could have) to help support the participation of programs in CQI efforts like the BSC.



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State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

# Sustaining Quality Improvement at All Levels of Systems



California Department of Education  
Early Education and Support Division  
Sarah Neville-Morgan, Director

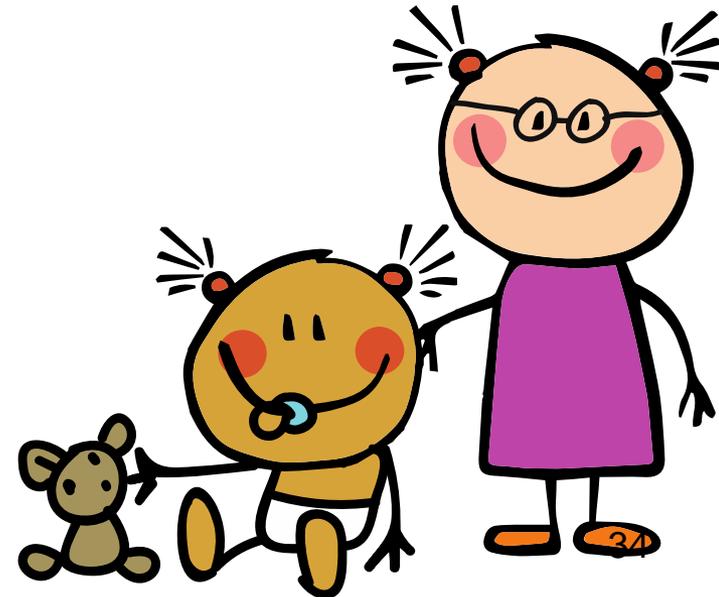
*We do not learn from  
experience, we learn from  
reflecting upon experience.*

“

- *John Dewey*

*Don't let the perfect get in the  
way of the good*

- *Unknown* (but widely used in QCC)





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# CDE-EESD Priorities for System Continuous Improvement

- ***Create One System with A Unified Voice—***  
**Lead Systems Alignment and Reform**
  - Moving from Parallel to Cooperative Play
- ***Address Equity and Build Capacity and Quality—***across Agencies, Programs and Settings, Communities and the ELC Workforce
- ***Integrity, Stewardship and Excellence—***  
Provide Reliable Leadership, Service, and Support



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# CDE-EESD Core Principles

A dynamic team of high-performing professionals who embrace continuous improvement and ongoing professional learning is essential to provide responsive service to the early childhood field.



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# Quality Counts California

Quality Counts California (QCC):

- A statewide system of locally-implemented quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) connecting families to high-quality early learning and care programs, and ensures infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children have quality early learning experiences in their local communities.
- Focus on scaling high-quality learning and care opportunities for all children by improving quality across the continuum of early learning and care settings





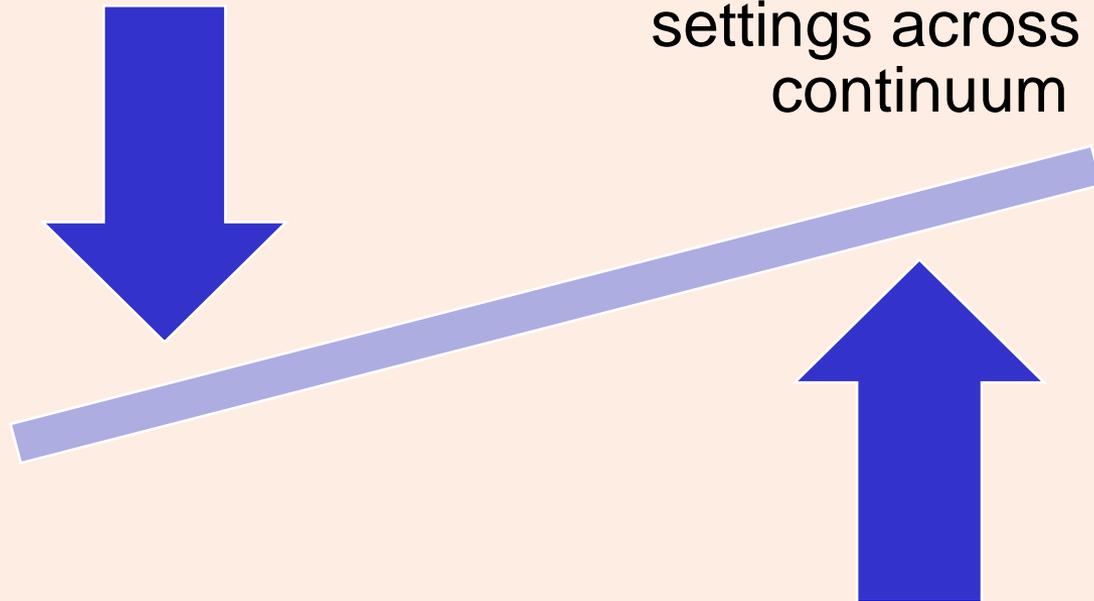
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# QCC as a Systems Building Lever



Quality Counts  
California system

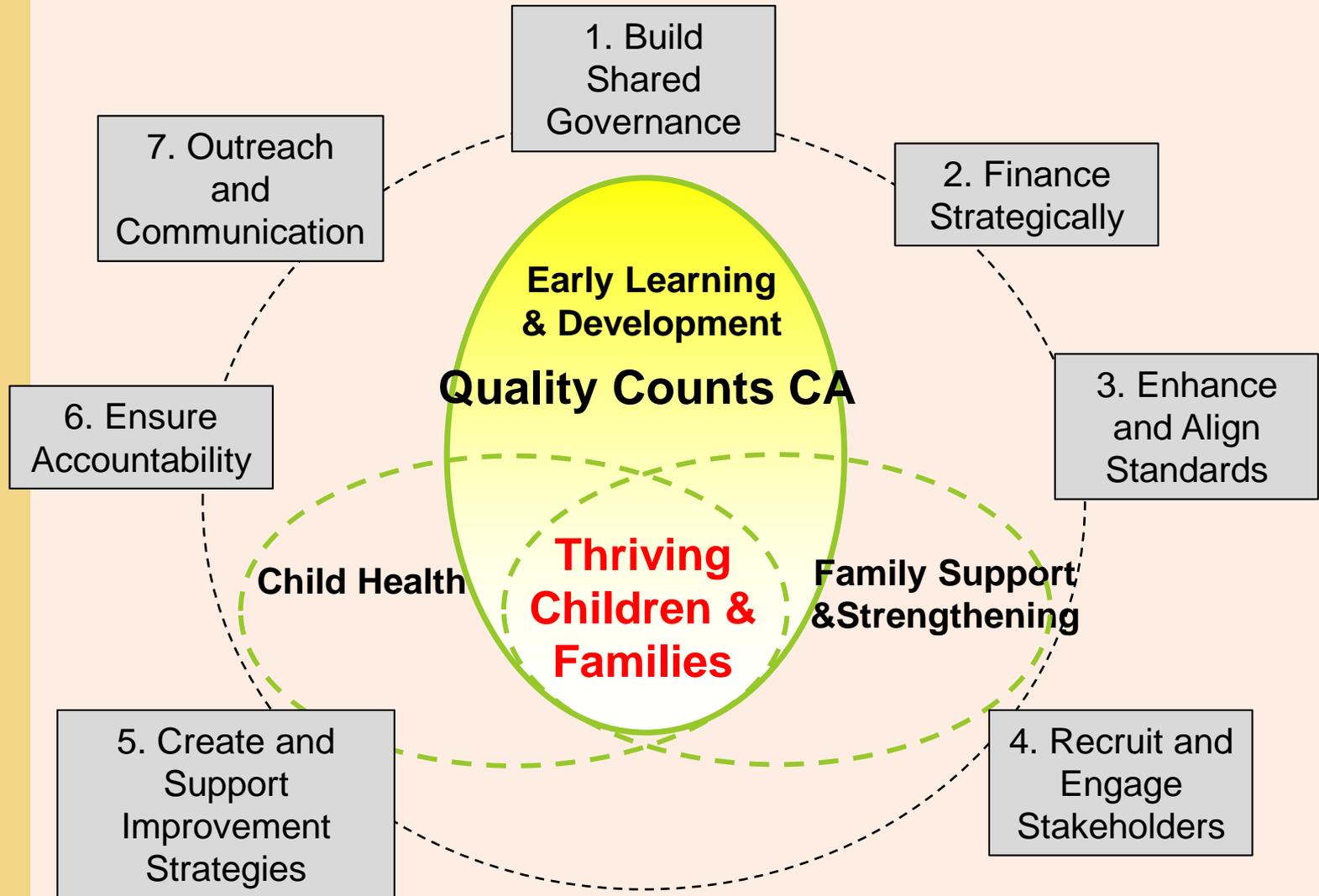
Improved system of  
quality that  
engages all quality  
partners and early  
learning and care  
settings across the  
continuum



# QRIS as a Systems Building Lever – System Functions



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# CQI for QCC

**Looking at the future, a three year plan was created to address:**

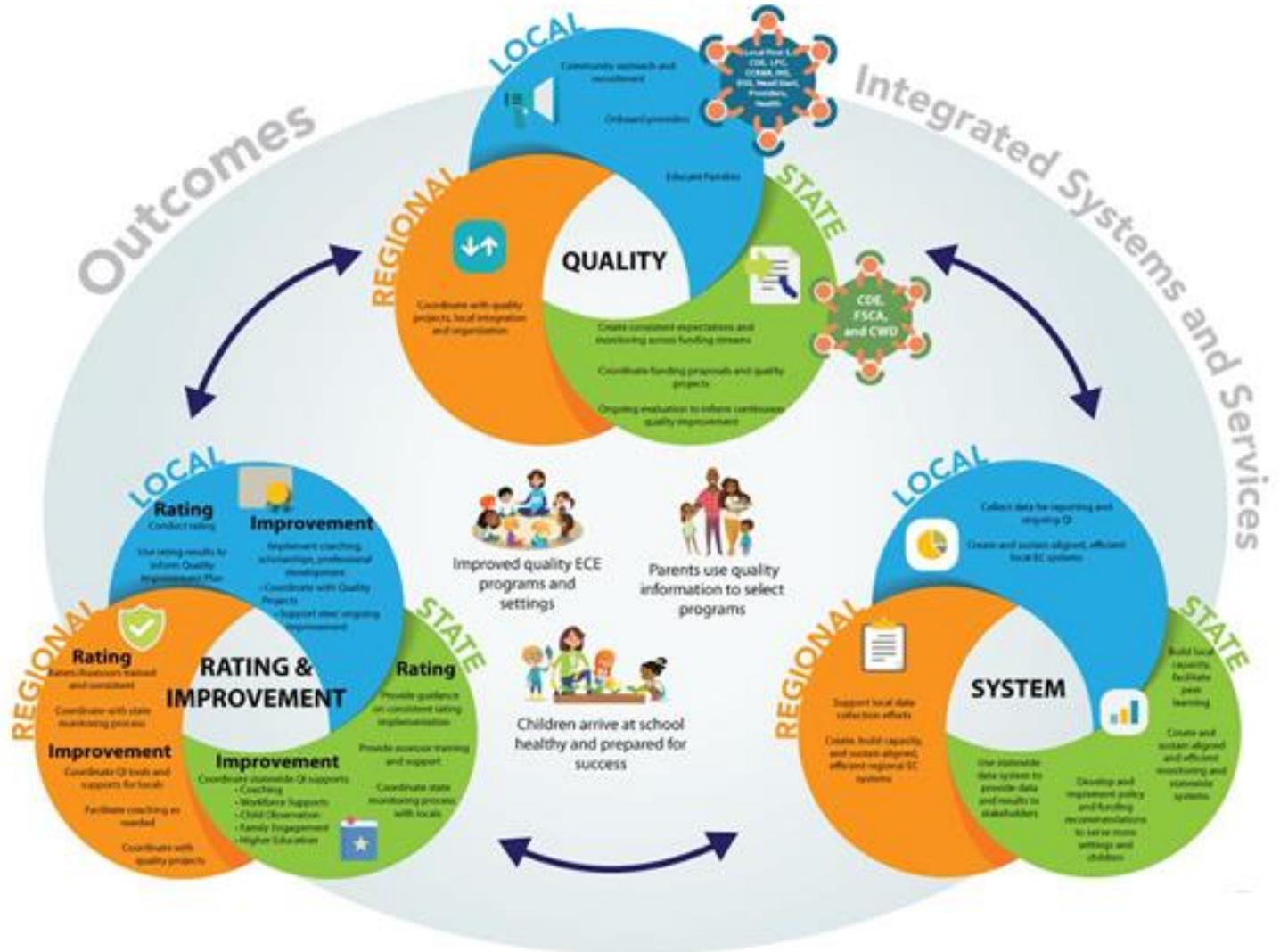
- Clarified Vision
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Effective Decision Making
- Transparent policy priorities aligned with comprehensive system
- Sustainability and increased efficiencies
- Whole Child view of system





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# QCC Three Year Plan





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# QCC Three Year Plan - System





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# SYSTEM

STATE

Build local capacity, facilitate peer learning

Create and sustain aligned and efficient monitoring and statewide systems

Develop and implement policy and funding recommendations to serve more settings and children

Use statewide data system to provide data and results to stakeholders





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**H**arnessing  
**O**ppportunity  
for  
**P**ositive  
**E**quitable Early  
Childhood  
Development



- Project HOPE will address the following:
  - Inequitable outcomes
  - Build cross-sector state teams
  - Address disparate access

# QCC Three Year Plan - Quality



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# QUALITY

STATE



Create consistent expectations and monitoring across funding streams

Coordinate funding proposals and quality projects

Ongoing evaluation to inform continuous quality improvement





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# Improving Early Education Workforce

## A joint project by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA)

### California's Overarching Goal includes:

- Ensure a diverse, culturally and linguistically responsive, high-quality workforce across the continuum of early learning and care settings
- A system “that can truly meet the needs of children from birth through age 8” by implementing a fully developed and articulated statewide system of certification, preparation, and support for California’s early childhood professionals.

# QCC Three Year Plan – Rating & Improvement



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# RATING & IMPROVEMENT

## Rating

Provide guidance  
on consistent rating  
implementation

Provide assessor training  
and support

Coordinate state  
monitoring process  
with locals

## Improvement

Coordinate statewide QI supports:

- Coaching
- Workforce Supports
- Child Observation
- Family Engagement
- Higher Education



STATE



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# CQI in Infrastructure Development

## Coaching

- Support and certify that all QCC coaches possess foundational knowledge, skills, and dispositions to promote the learning and growth of early childhood educators

## Training

- Improve early childhood educators' access to research-based, high-quality training that supports their learning and growth

## Regional Structure

- Build capacity to engage in reflective dialogue around shared values and collaborative decision making through Communities of Practice

## Rating and Assessment

- Strengthen implementation of rating and assessment practices

## Family Engagement

- Enhance early childhood educators' skills and strategies to support family resiliency and engagement



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# QCI – Increasing Site Participation across the Continuum

- Revised QRIS Block Grant and the application
  - Moving to a Quality Counts California QRIS Block Grant Request for Applications where quality improvement is the focus
- Clearer messaging of support
  - Ensure that the Infant/Toddler QRIS Leads understand programs CAN participate without being rated
- Update to the Rating Matrix
  - Developing a scaled-down Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)





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# And now...



- Improved state and local collaboration
- Created an inclusive quality system
- Stronger partnerships at state and local level
- Building an infrastructure that supports increased efficiencies
- Clear quality standards as a common language
- Increased investments in *quality*
- Stronger state and local collaboration and partnerships



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# Thanks!

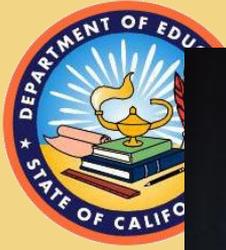
- Questions?
- [snevillemorgan@cde.ca.gov](mailto:snevillemorgan@cde.ca.gov)



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State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

✓ Thoughts

✓ Questions

✓ Feedback



# Resources

- **The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance (2nd Edition)** Langley GL, Moen R, Nolan KM, Nolan TW, Norman CL, Provost LP  
San Francisco, California, USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers; 2009
- **Culture of Continuous Learning Project: A Literature Review of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC)**  
[https://www.grisnetwork.org/sites/all/files/session/resources/Culture%20of%20Continuous%20Learning%20Project\\_0.pdf](https://www.grisnetwork.org/sites/all/files/session/resources/Culture%20of%20Continuous%20Learning%20Project_0.pdf)
- **Culture of Continuous Learning Project: A Breakthrough Series Collaborative for Improving Child Care and Head Start Quality (the CCL Project)** <https://www.childtrends.org/project/culture-of-continuous-learning-project>

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