

## Staff Qualifications, Professional Development, and Supports

Staff qualification indicators used in QRIS cover multiple features related to levels of education, initial training (hours and content), ongoing professional development, and staff supports. These staff qualifications features are the most commonly included indicators in the QRIS for both centers and family child care (FCC). This fact sheet provides a summary of staff indicators in 41 QRIS in the United States.

This fact sheet is one of a series about the state of quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) in the United States. In 2016, there were 41 fully operational QRIS in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Data are from the QRIS Compendium (<http://QRIScompendium.org>), a catalog of the QRIS operating in the United States as of October 31, 2016.<sup>2</sup>

### Categories of Indicators

#### Education Levels and Credentials

Nearly all QRIS include education requirements for center staff and family child care (FCC) providers to achieve a quality level or points toward a quality level.

- ◆ For centers, 37 QRIS (90 percent) include education requirements; 34 QRIS (83 percent) include them for FCC. These numbers have been stable since 2014.
- ◆ One notable change is the increase from 17 to 36 QRIS that are including state credential requirements as an indicator for centers.

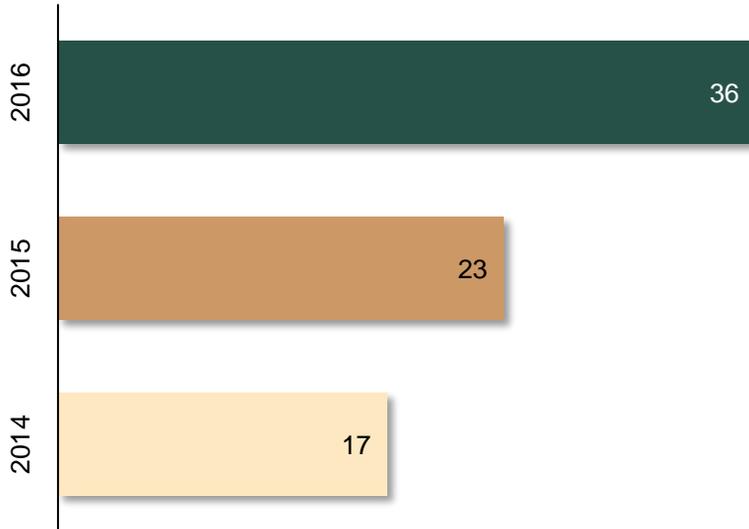
**Colorado Shines QRIS** is one example of how a QRIS incorporates credentials for centers. Shines' programs earn points to achieve levels three to five by having credentialed staff, including directors, early childhood teachers, assistant teachers, and aides. A program is awarded points based on the percentage of staff with a credential.

---

<sup>1</sup> State with a QRIS: AR, AZ, CA, CO, DE, FL (3 localities), GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI. While most QRIS operate at the state level, three represent separate counties in Florida (Duval, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach). The California QRIS, while represented in the Compendium as one system, is implemented at the county level and does not include all counties in the state.

<sup>2</sup> Data compiled in 2014 and 2015 from <http://QRIScompendium.org> are used to show change in the number of QRIS with specific features. These data are supplemented by an earlier version of the Compendium titled *Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations*, which was released in 2010. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/compendium-of-quality-rating-systems-and-evaluations>. Publicly available details about QRIS standards and implementation and interviews with QRIS administrators also inform the fact sheet.

**Figure 1: Number of QRIS with Credential Requirements for Centers, 2016**



Note: N = 41 QRIS.

## Years of Experience

- ◆ Approximately one-third of QRIS have indicators that award points or levels when center staff (14 QRIS; 34 percent) and FCC providers (11 QRIS; 27 percent) have greater years of experience.
- ◆ A total of 14 QRIS (34 percent) have experience indicators for centers, while 11 QRIS (27 percent) include experience indicators for FCC.
- ◆ Ten QRIS (24 percent) include professional membership as an indicator for center staff.
- ◆ Eight QRIS (20 percent) include professional membership as an indicator for FCC providers.

## Training

- ◆ In 37 QRIS (90 percent), indicators are included for center staff to complete training on specific professional development topics.
- ◆ Similarly, 34 QRIS (83 percent) have training indicators for FCC providers. See Table 1 for specific topics included in training indicators.

Table 1: Training Topics in QRIS Indicators

Training Topics	Centers	FCC
Introduction to observation tools	37%	29%
Orientation to QRIS	32%	39%
Health and safety	29%	27%
Business practices	27%	27%
Child development	27%	24%
Special needs	27%	20%
Curriculum	24%	20%
Social/emotional development	24%	17%
Family engagement	20%	15%
Diversity	20%	17%
Developmentally appropriate practice	17%	20%
Nutrition	17%	20%
Child assessment	15%	20%

Note: N = 41 QRIS

## Professional Membership

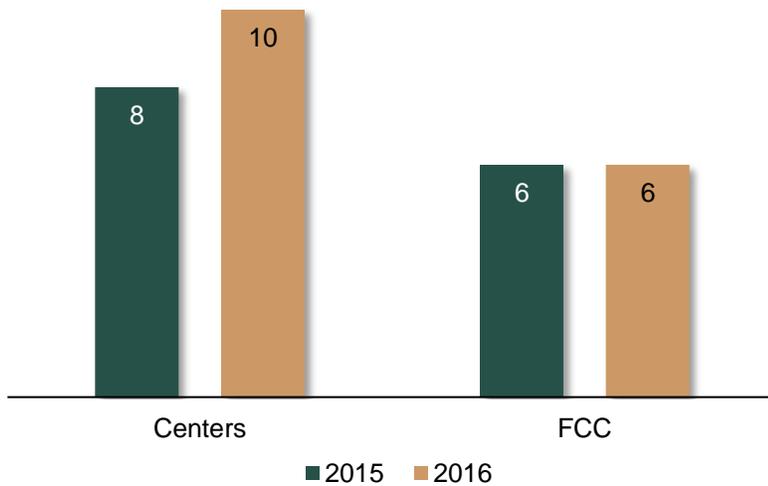
- ◆ Ten QRIS (24 percent) include professional membership as an indicator for center staff;
- ◆ Eight QRIS (20 percent) include professional membership as an indicator for FCC providers.

## Use of Career Lattice

Career lattices are professional development systems that provide staff qualification levels to practitioners based on factors like education, years of experience, credentials, and training. While only one-third of QRIS include indicators related to years of experience as a separate indicator, other QRIS incorporate experience (along with other staff qualifications such as education level) through inclusion of a career lattice in the indicators. Use of career lattice participation for FCC is somewhat less common as shown in Figure 2.

In **Minnesota**, points are awarded based on steps achieved by center lead teachers on the Minnesota Career Lattice, and points are averaged across lead teachers in a program for the overall lattice level for the program.

Figure 2: Number of QRIS That Include a Career Lattice Indicator



### Staff Support Indicators

- ◆ Twenty-nine (71 percent) of QRIS recognize in their indicators a variety of supports for teachers in centers.
- ◆ As shown in Table 2, approximately one-third of QRIS include specific indicators related to one of the following center staff supports: staff evaluations, benefits, handbooks, and staff meetings.
- ◆ Sixteen QRIS (39 percent) include three or more support indicators for center staff and nine include more than five indicators.

For example, **Utah** specifies 10 staff support indicators that can be counted toward program ratings, including internal training opportunities that go beyond topics required by licensing and financial incentives for increased education.

- ◆ Some QRIS address these topics through other administrative practices, like use of the Program Administration Scale (PAS).<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ Ten (24 percent) QRIS include the PAS in their indicators as one way to assess supports for center teachers.

---

<sup>3</sup> Talan, T., & Bloom, P. (2011).

**Table 2: Staff Supports in QRIS Indicators**

Staff Supports	Centers
Staff evaluations	34%
Benefits (health insurance, etc.)	32%
Staff handbook	29%
Staff meetings	29%
Salary schedule	24%
Paid professional development time	24%
Paid planning	20%
Paid teacher collaboration time	10%
Cost of living adjustments	5%

Note: N = 41 QRIS

## QRIS Showcase: Wisconsin YoungStar

Wisconsin's QRIS, YoungStar, is a five-star system open to licensed centers, family child care homes (FCC) programs, day camp, and school-age programs. Any program that wishes to receive Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments from families must participate in YoungStar, and other programs can participate voluntarily. YoungStar contains required and optional rating indicators and functions as a hybrid system due to the minimum requirements and point values that must be met to reach each star level. Among other things, YoungStar includes indicators that promote increased staff/provider qualifications at the three, four, and five star levels, including credit-based education and professional development.

Conversations about the importance of staff qualifications, particularly credit-based instruction, for program quality began to take shape in 2004 as part of the state's Quality Care for Quality Kids Taskforce initiative. At that time, director qualifications were identified as an important way to influence program quality and that a director should complete specific education about early childhood to have the greatest impact. These conversations continued for several years and were eventually included as specific indicators related to staff qualifications when YoungStar was implemented in 2010.

YoungStar evaluates the educational qualifications of both the director and lead teachers in centers. For a 3-star rating, directors need to be a registry level 10, which is the completion of a credential, or 24 early childhood education (ECE) credits, and 50 percent of classrooms must have lead teachers with at least 6 ECE credits. The qualification requirements go up from there and top out at the 5-star level, which requires a director to have reached a registry level 13 (an ECE associate's degree and completion of a registry credential) and requires that all classrooms have lead teachers with an associate's degree or higher. YoungStar also has opportunities for programs to earn points for completing specific trainings, such as the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards<sup>4</sup> and the Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social-Emotional Learning<sup>5</sup>.

FCC providers are also able to earn points by completing training in the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Learning. YoungStar includes minimum credit-based education requirements for FCC providers, although they are a bit different from those for centers. At the 3-star rating, FCC providers must have earned a registry level 9, which is equivalent to 1 registry credential or 18 ECE credits. At the 5-star rating, a registry level 12 is required, which is equivalent to an ECE associate's degree.

YoungStar provides various supports to help programs and practitioners meet the staff qualification indicators. Supports include opportunities for community-based, credit-based instruction funded through Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge<sup>6</sup>, professional development support to identify pathways to gather required credits, opportunities for credit for prior learning through institutes of higher education, T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood<sup>7</sup> scholarships and counseling support, onsite professional development counseling, and Registry career level coupons.

In 2017, YoungStar revisited its education indicators with changes being implemented in 2019. Changes to the indicators are intended to engage two-star programs in a more active way, particularly FCC providers, to encourage them to demonstrate high-quality early education practices with their environments.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/practice>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wi-pyramid-model-about.php>

<sup>6</sup> Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge was a competitive grant program that focused on supporting states' efforts to design and implement an integrated system of high-quality early learning and development programs and services and to increase the number of children with high needs enrolled in those programs and services. Additional information is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://teachecnationalcenter.org/t-e-a-c-h-early-childhood/>

## References

The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). *A Catalog and Comparison of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) [Data System]*. Retrieved from <http://qriscompendium.org/>

Mathematica Policy Research Inc. & Child Trends. (2010). *Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations*. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/compendium-of-quality-rating-systems-and-evaluations>

Talan, T., & Bloom, P. (2011). *Program administration scale: Measuring early childhood leadership and management*. New York: Teachers College Press.

*This document was developed with funds from Grant # 90TA0002-01-00 for the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Office of Child Care, and Health Resources and Services Administration, by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance in cooperation with Child Trends. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.*

*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.*

### National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance

9300 Lee Highway  
Fairfax, VA 22031

Phone: 877-296-2250  
Email: [QualityAssuranceCenter@ecetta.info](mailto:QualityAssuranceCenter@ecetta.info)

#### Subscribe to Updates

[http://www.occ-cmc.org/occannouncements\\_sign-up/](http://www.occ-cmc.org/occannouncements_sign-up/)



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**