

Quality Rating and Improvement System Quality Standards Web Sites

About QRIS

A quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels, QRIS award quality ratings to early and school-age care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards. By participating in their State's QRIS, early and school-age care and education providers embark on a path of continuous quality improvement. Even providers that have met the standards of the lowest QRIS levels have achieved levels of quality that are beyond the minimum requirements to operate.

QRIS are composed of five common elements:

1. **Program Standards:** QRIS standards are built on the foundation of child care licensing requirements and add multiple steps between licensing and higher quality standards, such as those associated with accreditation.
2. **Supports for Programs and Practitioners:** Support for providers, such as training, mentoring, and technical assistance, are included to promote participation and help programs achieve higher levels of quality.
3. **Financial Incentives:** Financial incentives, such as quality bonuses and tiered subsidy reimbursement (which pays a higher reimbursement rate to providers who care for children from families who receive CCDF subsidies and meet standards beyond minimum licensing), are awarded to programs when quality levels are achieved.
4. **Quality Assurance and Monitoring:** Accountability and monitoring processes are used to track progress toward, attainment of, and maintenance of program quality standards.
5. **Consumer Education:** Most QRIS award easily recognizable symbols, such as stars, to programs to indicate the levels of quality and inform and educate parents

Web Sites for QRIS Quality Standards

QRIS quality standards are used to assign ratings to programs that participate in QRIS, providing parents and the public with information about each program’s quality. States typically use licensing standards as the starting point, or base, of the system, on which higher levels of quality standards are built. Every QRIS contains two or more levels of standards beyond licensing, with incremental progressions to the highest level of quality as defined by the State. Systems vary in the number of levels and number of standards identified in each level. The types of standards used by QRIS to assign ratings are based on research about the characteristics of programs that produce positive child outcomes.

The following tables provide the Web sites for States’ QRIS standards compiled by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center). States often have multiple sets of standards for specific types of early care and education providers, such as child care centers, family child care (FCC) homes, and school-age programs.

States Implementing QRIS

The table below includes 41 States (including the District of Columbia) that are implementing a QRIS model. For some States, it is noted if the QRIS is being revised, or operating in limited areas of the State.

States Implementing QRIS and Their Web Sites

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|------------|--|--|
| Arizona | Quality First http://qualityfirstaz.com/ | Quality First Points Scale http://www.azftf.gov/WhatWeDo/Programs/QualityFirst/Documents/Quality%20First%20Points%20Scale.pdf |
| Arkansas | Better Beginnings http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/ | Better Beginnings Rule Book – includes separate standards for centers, family child care, and school-age care http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/sites/default/files/pdf_files/ProvidersandTeachers-Providers-Centers-BetterBeginningsRuleBook.pdf |
| California | California’s Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/ | Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Implementation http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/rttelcapproach.asp |
| Colorado | Colorado Shines http://coloradoshines.force.com/ColoradoShines | Colorado Shines QRIS Point Structure Guide for Quality Levels 3-5 http://coloradoshines.force.com/ColoradoShines/resource/1428604188000/ColoShinesQRISPDF |

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Delaware | Delaware Stars for Early Success http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/ | Early Child Care Programs Standards (2014) http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/ECE-Standard-7.1.20141.pdf Family Child Care Providers Standards (2014) http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/FCCStandards7.1.2014R.pdf Large Family Child Care Providers Standards (July 2014) http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/LFCCStandards7.1.2014R.pdf School-age Only Programs Standards (July 2012) http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/School-Age-Only-Standards-Final-July-1-2015-BR.pdf |
| District of Columbia | Going for the Gold http://www.learnDC.org | Standards not available on the Web |
| Florida Duval | Guiding Stars Duval http://www.elcduval.org/guiding-stars-of-duval/ | Guiding Stars of Duval – GSOD 2.0 http://www.elcduval.org/wp-content/uploads/gsod/050514%20GSOD%202%200%20Tool%20-%20June%202013%20-%20Board%20Mtg.pdf |
| Florida Miami Dade | Quality Counts http://www.elcmdm.org/qualitycounts/ | Standards not available on website |
| Florida Palm Beach | Strong Minds http://providers.cscpbcc.org/bequality | Provider Manual http://cdn.trustedpartner.com/docs/library/ChildrensServicesCouncilProviders2011/Strong_Minds_Provider_Manual_Updated11915.pdf |
| Georgia | Quality Rated https://qualityrated.decal.ga.gov/ | Quality Rated Rating Rubric https://qualityrated.decal.ga.gov/Content/Documents/PM_RatingRubric.pdf |

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|----------|---|---|
| Idaho | IdahoSTARS Quality Rating & Improvement System http://idahostars.org/?q=qris | Steps to Quality (includes both Child Care Centers and Child Care Home Based Providers) http://idahostars.org/?q=steps-to-quality |
| Illinois | ExceleRate Illinois QRIS http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/ | ExceleRate Illinois Quality Standards Overview Chart for Programs http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/standard-and-evidence-requirements ExceleRate Illinois Quality Standards Overview Chart for Licensed Family Child Care http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/how-it-works/licensed-family-child-care/licensed-family-child-care-overview |
| Indiana | Paths to QUALITY http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/2554.htm | Standards for Participation: Licensed Child Care Centers http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/files/CentersPTQStandards.pdf Standards for Participation: Licensed Child Care Homes http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/files/HomesPTQStandards.pdf Standards for Participation: Unlicensed Registered Child Care Ministries http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/files/MinistriesPTQStandards.pdf |
| Iowa | Iowa Quality Rating System http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/iqrs/ | Child Care Center Chart http://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/QRS%20NEW%20Center%20Chart%202-1-11.doc Child Development Home Chart http://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/QRS%20NEW%20Home%20Chart%202-1-11.doc |

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|-----------|--|--|
| Kansas | Kansas Quality Rating Improvement System http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/KQRIS.pdf Operating only in some areas of the State. Kansas is currently developing a new system. | Rating Criteria Chart http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/PDFs/KQRIS%20Process%20and%20Rating%20Criteria-2013.pdf |
| Kentucky | STARS for KIDS NOW Child Care Quality Rating System http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc/stars/default.htm | STARS for KIDS NOW Level Requirements for Type I Centers http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/ronlyres/5CBCD8A7-BE83-4444-9FB6-80CFB68558D7/0/11302009TypeIGrid.pdf STARS for KIDS NOW Level Requirements for Type II Licensed Family Child Care Homes http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/ronlyres/BA1999BF-FA4B-4DD9-B665-946CC24E3633/0/11302009TypeIIGrid.pdf STARS for KIDS NOW Level Requirements for Certified Family Child Care Homes http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/ronlyres/EFC282BC-0264-4573-88D3-9692F588BE53/0/11302009CertifiedGrid.pdf |
| Louisiana | Quality Start http://www.qrslouisiana.org/ | Quality Start Model (August 2013) http://www.qrslouisiana.org/assets/files/QS-Model-Aug-2013.pdf |
| Maine | Quality for ME http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm | Standards for Child Care Centers http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/quality_cbc.pdf Standards for Family Child Care Homes http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/quality_fcc.pdf Standards for School-Age Care http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/quality_sac.pdf Standards for Head Start Programs http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/quality_headstart.pdf |

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|---------------|--|--|
| Maryland | <p>Maryland EXCELS http://www.marylandexcels.org/</p> <p>Implementation of this revised QRIS system began in July 2013. While participation is voluntary, for programs accepting Child Care Subsidy, participation will be required by July, 2015.</p> | <p>Child Care Center Standards (2014) http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/data/ck/sites/217/files/Child%20Care%20Center%20Standards%20March%202014%20(5).pdf</p> <p>Family Child Care Standards (2014) http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/data/ck/sites/217/files/Family%20Child%20Care%20Standards%20March%202014.pdf</p> <p>School-age Only Standards (2014) http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/data/ck/sites/217/files/School%20Age%20Only%20Standards%20March%202014.pdf</p> <p>Public Pre-K Standards (2013) http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/data/ck/sites/217/files/EXCELS%20Public%20Pre-K%20Standards_revisedNov_2012%20(2).doc</p> |
| Massachusetts | <p>Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/gris/gris.html</p> | <p>Massachusetts Standards Documents http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/gris/massachusetts-gris-standards.html</p> |
| Michigan | <p>Great Start to Quality http://www.greatstarttoquality.org/</p> | <p>Great Start to Quality Standards and Points (January 2013) http://greatstarttoquality.org/sites/default/files/Great%20Start%20to%20Quality%20Standards%20FINAL%20v2%2004%2025%202013%20%282%29.pdf</p> |

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|-------------|---|---|
| Minnesota | Parent Aware http://parentaware.org | Indicators and Scoring – Full Rating for Center-based Programs http://parentaware.org/content/uploads//2016/02/Parent-Aware-Indicators-and-Scoring-for-CCC.pdf Indicators and Scoring - Full Rating for Family Child Care Providers http://parentaware.org/content/uploads//2016/02/Parent-Aware-Indicators-and-Scoring-for-FCC.pdf Indicators and Scoring- Accelerated Pathway to Rating for Head Start, accredited child care, school based pre-kindergarten, early childhood special education, and charter school programs http://parentaware.org/content/uploads//2016/02/Parent-Aware-Indicators-and-Scoring-for-APR.pdf |
| Mississippi | Mississippi Child Care Quality Stars http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/programs/qualitystars/index.php | Mississippi State Child Care Quality Step System Criteria http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/programs/qualitystars/criteria/pdfs/Criteria.pdf |
| Montana | Best Beginnings STARS to Quality http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/STARS.aspx | Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Center Matrix http://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/hcsd/documents/ChildCare/STARS/CenterStandards.pdf STARS to Quality Family and Group Matrix http://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/hcsd/documents/ChildCare/STARS/FamilyGroupStandards.pdf |
| Nebraska | Step Up to Quality http://www.education.ne.gov/StepUpToQuality/ | Nebraska’s Program Guide Step Up to Quality http://www.education.ne.gov/StepUpToquality/pubs/guide.pdf Nebraska’s Path to Early Childhood Quality Improvement http://www.education.ne.gov/StepUpToquality/pubs/overview.pdf Rating Readiness Tool http://www.education.ne.gov/StepUpToquality/pubs/ratingreadiness.pdf |

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|---------------|--|--|
| Nevada | Silver State Stars QRIS http://www.nvsilverstatestars.org | Licensed Center Model http://www.nvsilverstatestars.org/_public/themes/default/files/model%206.10.2015.pdf Family Child Care, Licensed Exempt, and Tribal QRIS models are currently being piloted and will be available in 2015. |
| New Hampshire | New Hampshire's Quality Rating and Improvement System http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf/licensedplus/index.htm | Licensed Plus Quality Standards http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf/licensedplus/documents/option1standards.pdf |
| New Mexico | FOCUS https://www.newmexicokids.org/focus/ | FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality for Center-Based Programs (January 2015) https://www.newmexicokids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/FOCUS_Criteria_Essential_Elements_of_Quality_01222015.pdf FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality for Family Child Care Homes (May 2012) https://www.newmexicokids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/FOCUS_TQRIS_FamilyChildCare_5-9-12rev.pdf FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality for Out of School Time Programs (July 2012) https://www.newmexicokids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/FOCUS_TQRIS_Out_of_School_Time_7-30-12rev.pdf |
| New York | QUALITYstarsNY http://qualitystarsny.org/ | Center-Based Program Standards http://www.qualitystarsny.org/pdf/QUALITYstarsNY-Standards-Center_Based.pdf Family/Home Program Standards http://www.qualitystarsny.org/pdf/QUALITYstarsNY-Standards-Family_Home.pdf Public School Program Standards http://www.qualitystarsny.org/pdf/QUALITYstarsNY-Standards-Public_School.pdf |

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|----------------|---|---|
| North Carolina | North Carolina Star Rated License System http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv_sn2_ov_sr.asp | How Points Are Earned http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv_sn2_hpaee.asp Child Care Rules – full text of all standards in Section .2800 http://nrckids.org/default/assets/File/StateRegs/NC/nc_2800.pdf |
| Ohio | Step Up to Quality http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/sutq.php | Center Step Up to Quality Program Standards http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/files/sutq/ProgramStandards081913.pdf Standards for Family Child Care http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/files/sutq/stepUp-GREEN-family072414_1.pdf |
| Oklahoma | Reaching for the Stars http://www.okdhs.org/services/cc/Pages/childcareSTARS.aspx | Reaching for the Stars for Child Care Centers http://www.okdhs.org/OKDHS%20Publication%20Library/99-39.pdf Reaching for the Stars for Family Child Care Homes http://www.okdhs.org/OKDHS%20Publication%20Library/99-43.pdf#search=reaching%20for%20the%20stars%20family%20child%20care Policies for the differential quality rating and improvement certification are located in Sections 8.3-8.10, Subchapter 1 General Provisions, Chapter 110 Licensing Services, OKDHS Oklahoma Administrative Code 340 |
| Oregon | Oregon QRIS http://triwou.org/projects/qrisc | Center Based Programs https://91372e5fba0d1fb26b72-13cee80c2bfb23b1a8fcedea15638c1f.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/cms/Standards2014Center1_231.pdf Family Based Programs http://5c2cabd466efc6790a0a-6728e7c952118b70f16620a9fc754159.r37.cf1.rackcdn.com/cms/Standards2014Family_232_536.pdf |

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|----------------|--|---|
| Pennsylvania | Keystone STARS http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS | Keystone STARS Center Performance Standards for FY 2014-2015 (July 2014) http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/Early%20Learning%20Programs/Keystone%20STARS/2014-2015%20REVISED%20Keystone%20STARS%20Performance%20Standards%20for%20Centers.pdf Keystone STARS Family Child Care Home Performance Standards for FY 2014-2015 (July 2014) http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/Early%20Learning%20Programs/Keystone%20STARS/2014-2015%20REVISED%20Keystone%20STARS%20Performance%20Standards%20for%20Family%20CCH.pdf Keystone STARS Group Home Performance Standards for FY 2014-2015 (July 2014) http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/Early%20Learning%20Programs/Keystone%20STARS/2014-2015%20REVISED%20Keystone%20STARS%20Performance%20Standards%20for%20Group%20Homes.pdf |
| Rhode Island | BrightStars http://www.brightstars.org/providers/brightstars-quality-rating/ | Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework http://www.brightstars.org/uploads/CenterPreschool_framework.pdf Family Child Care Quality Framework http://www.brightstars.org/uploads/Family_English_framework_1216-1.pdf School-Age Child Care (K-5) Quality Framework http://www.brightstars.org/uploads/School-Age_framework.pdf |
| South Carolina | ABC Child Care Program http://www.scchildcare.org/ | Quality Standards for Levels A, B, and C http://www.scchildcare.org/library/abc-quality-documents.aspx |

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|------------|---|---|
| Tennessee | Star-Quality Child Care Program http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/adfam/ccrcsq.html All licensed and approved child care providers in Tennessee are evaluated and issued a Report Card. Eligible providers can participate in the Star-Quality program. | Star-Quality Child Care Program: Report Card for Child Care Centers http://www.tennessee.gov/assets/entities/humanservices/attachments/card-centers.pdf Star-Quality Child Care Program: Report Card for Family and Group Child Care Homes http://www.tennessee.gov/assets/entities/humanservices/attachments/card-familygroup.pdf |
| Texas | Texas Rising Star Provider Certification https://texasrisingstar.org/ | Texas Rising Star Categories https://texasrisingstar.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Texas-Rising-Star-Certification-Guidelines-3.27.15.pdf |
| Utah | Care About Childcare https://careaboutchildcare.utah.gov/provider/default.aspx | Quality Standards Center https://careaboutchildcare.utah.gov/pub/qualityCenter.pdf |
| Vermont | STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) http://dcf.vermont.gov/childcare/providers/stars | Forms for STARS http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/forms-stars |
| Virginia | Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) http://www.smartbeginnings.org/qrisc | Standards for Classroom-based Programs http://www.smartbeginnings.org/Portals/5/PDFs/VSQI/QRISStandard11_4_11.pdf Standards for Family Child Care Homes http://www.smartbeginnings.org/Portals/5/PDFs/VSQI/FCC_QRIS_Standards.pdf |
| Washington | Early Achievers http://www.del.wa.gov/care/qrisc | Early Achievers Quality Standards http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/elac-qrisc/docs/EA_Quality_Standards.pdf Early Achievers Companion to the Quality Standards http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/elac-qrisc/docs/EA_facility_companion.pdf |

| States | System Names and Web Sites | QRIS Quality Standards Web Site (When Available) |
|-----------|--|--|
| Wisconsin | YoungStar http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/ | YoungStar Minimum Point Requirements http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/minimum_points_requirements.pdf YoungStar QRIS Quality Indicator Point Detail for Group Programs http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/point_detail/2016-point-detail/point-detail-group-2016.pdf YoungStar QRIS Quality Indicator Point Detail for Family Programs http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/point_detail/2016-point-detail/point-detail-family-2016.pdf YoungStar QRIS Quality Indicator Point Detail for School-Age Programs http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/point_detail/2016-point-detail/point-detail-schoolage-2016.pdf |

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