



Accreditation Accepted for QRIS

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) standards; (2) accountability measures; (3) program and practitioner outreach and support; (4) financial incentives; and (5) parent/consumer education efforts.

The *Quality Rating and Improvement System Resource Guide* is a tool for States and communities to explore key issues and decision points during the planning and implementation of a QRIS. It is available at <https://occqrisguide.icfwebservices.com/>.

Accreditation and QRIS

In most QRIS, accreditation is included as a measure of quality for ratings. The ways accreditation is included varies from State to State. In some, becoming accredited is the indicator for the highest level in the system; while in other States, it is a way for programs to earn points toward the rating score. The following table shows the accrediting organizations that are accepted in QRIS that are operating statewide, and how accreditation is included in the QRIS standards.

The following abbreviations are used in the table for accreditation organizations:

ACSI = Association for Christian Schools International

AMI = Association Montessori International/USA

AMS = American Montessori Society

AWSNA = Association of Waldorf Schools of North America

CARF = Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities: Child and Youth Services Standards

COA = Council on Accreditation

COA (After School) = Council on Accreditation, After School Programs (formerly the National AfterSchool Association)

ICAA = International Christian Accrediting

NAC = National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs

NAEYC = National Association for the Education of Young Children, Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation

NAFCC = National Association for Family Child Care

NECPA = National Early Childhood Program Accreditation

NCME = National Center for Montessori Education

NLSA = National Lutheran School Accreditation

SACS = Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
Arizona	Quality First http://qualityfirstaz.com/	Accreditation is not included in the QRIS.	
Arkansas	Better Beginnings http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARF • COA (After School) • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Child care centers and family child care homes that are accredited are considered certified. Additional documentation or reviews may be required to determine level of Better Beginnings certification.
Colorado	Qualistar Rating System http://www.qualistar.org/home.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSI • Council on Quality and Leadership for People With Disabilities • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Providers earn points in 5 areas of standards, up to a total of 42 points. In 4 areas of the standards, 0–10 points can be earned. Two points are awarded for program accreditation.

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
Delaware	Delaware Stars for Early Success http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC 	NAEYC accredited programs, once accepted into Delaware Stars, must provide a copy of their accreditation and complete the Delaware Stars Orientation specific to NAEYC programs. Once complete, NAEYC programs are designated Star Level 5 and may keep their Star Level by maintaining their NAEYC accreditation and submitting copies of their annual NAEYC reports to Delaware Stars.
District of Columbia	Going for the Gold www.learnDC.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • COA (After School) • NAEYC • NAFCC • Middle States Association 	Accreditation is required to achieve the gold level (i.e., the highest level).
Georgia	Quality Rated https://qualityrated.decal.ga.gov/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSI • AMI • COA • NAC • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA • NLSA 	Accreditation results in “Bonus Points” towards higher ratings. NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, and COA receive two points and NECPA, SACS, NAC, NLSA, and ACSI receive one point.
Idaho	IdahoSTARS Quality Rating & Improvement System http://idahostars.org/?q=gris	Accreditation is not included in the QRIS.	

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
Illinois	Illinois Quality Counts (Family Child Care) http://www.ilqualitycounts.com/quality-rating-system/overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAFCC 	Accreditation is an option to achieve 3 stars and required to achieve 4 stars (the highest level). To achieve 2 stars, programs must receive information about accreditation.
	ExceleRate Illinois QRIS http://excelerateillinois.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAC • NAEYC 	NAEYC and NAC accreditation are accepted at the Silver or Gold Circle of Quality. Additional standards must be met for either accreditation.
Indiana	Paths to QUALITY http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/2554.htm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSI • COA • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA 	Accreditation is required to achieve level 4 (i.e., the highest level).
Iowa	Iowa Child Care Quality Rating System http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/iqrs/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • COA (After School) • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Providers earn points to achieve levels 3–5. Fifteen points are awarded for accreditation in Child Development Homes. In Licensed Child Care Centers, Preschools, and School-Based Programs, 18 points are awarded for accreditation. If a center is not yet accredited, they can receive 5 points for having their accreditation self-assessment approved by NAEYC.
Kansas	Kansas Quality Rating Improvement System http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/provider_kqris.html Operating only in some areas of the state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Point-based star system. Accredited programs receive two points.

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
Kentucky	STARS for KIDS NOW Child Care Quality Rating System http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc/stars/default.htm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSI • COA • COA (After School) • NAC • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA • SACS 	Accreditation is one of the criteria for the level 4 curriculum standards.
Louisiana	Quality Start http://www.qrslouisiana.org/	Accreditation is not included in the QRIS.	
Maine	Quality for ME http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMS • COA (After School) • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Accreditation is required to achieve step 4 (i.e., the highest level).

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
Maryland	Maryland EXCELS <i>Excellence Counts in Early Learning and School-Age Care</i> http://www.marylandexcels.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMI • AMS • Association of Independent Maryland Schools • AWSNA • COA (After School) • Maryland State Department of Education • Middle States Commission- Early Ages • Middle States Commission of Elementary Schools • NAC • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA 	To achieve level 5 (the highest level) the program must be accredited by an organization recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education.
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/qrisc/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA (After School) • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Accreditation can be used as a method to document compliance with some of the standards. QRIS standards are aligned to many standards in the accreditation.

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
<p>Michigan</p>	<p>Great Start to Quality http://www.greatstarttoquality.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC 	<p>An “Alternate Path” allows eligible NAEYC accredited programs to receive a 4-Star rating without having a Program Quality Assessment as long as enough points are achieved on the Self-Assessment Survey to earn a 4-Star rating.</p> <p>An Alternate Path program with a 5-Star Self-Assessment Survey must request a validation and Program Quality Assessment. A program with a completed validation and a Program Quality Assessment score high enough to qualify at the 5-Star level will post on greatstartCONNECT.org as a 5-Star.</p>
<p>Minnesota</p>	<p>Parent Aware http://www.parentawareratings.org/</p> <p>Operating only in some areas of the State. Statewide expansion underway.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment • AMS • ACSI • AMI • COA • NAC • NAEYC • NECPA • NHSA Quality Initiative: Head Start Performance Excellence and Quality Recognition Program 	<p>The “Accelerated Pathways to Rating” (APR) program allows accredited programs to follow a streamlined process to achieve a four star rating.</p>

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
Mississippi	Mississippi Child Care Quality Stars http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/programs/qualitystars/index.php	Accreditation is not included in the QRIS.	
Montana	Best Beginnings STARS to Quality http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/bestbeginnings/bestbeginningsstarstoquality.shtml A field test of this new QRIS is currently underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Accreditation is required to be a 5-star provider (i.e., highest level).
Nevada	Silver State Stars QRIS http://www.nvsilverstatestars.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC • NECPA 	For a 5-Star rating, accredited centers must meet required criteria, but do not have to provide additional documentation for the Quality Indicators.
New Hampshire	New Hampshire’s Quality Rating and Improvement System http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf/licensedplus/index.htm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA (After School) or grandfathered under NAA • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Accreditation is the requirement for the highest level of the system. The level is called “Accredited.” Being in the process of obtaining accreditation is one option for obtaining a Licensed-Plus designation. Programs who have participated in a Head Start review without a deficiency may also qualify for Licensed-Plus

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New Mexico	AIM HIGH http://www.newmexicokids.org/content/caregivers_and_educators/aim_high/ FOCUS http://www.newmexicokids.org/content/caregivers_and_educators/focus/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSI • COA • COA (After School) • ICAA • NAC • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA 	<p>Accreditation is required to obtain a 5-star license (i.e., the highest level) in AIM HIGH. In FOCUS, programs with a 5-star license designation must be accredited by an approved accrediting body or meet 5-star standards of the state's TQRIS.</p> <p>On April 3, 2013, all national early childhood accreditation organizations received a letter from the Children, Youth and Families Department providing information regarding the process required for their organization to gain state recognition of their early childhood accreditation for 5-star status. This process is needed to remedy the inconsistencies in quality of care that currently exist across 5-star programs. Current accredited programs have until January 1, 2018 to transition to a state-recognized early childhood accreditation or transition to Level 5 of the State's FOCUS TQRIS.</p>
New York	QUALITYstarsNY http://qualitystarsny.org/ Operating only in some areas of the State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Programs that are accredited by either NAEYC (2006 standards) or NAFCC automatically receive a certain number of points. All programs have independent ERS observations.

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
North Carolina	North Carolina Star Rated License System http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/parents/prsn2_ov_sr.asp	Accreditation is not included in North Carolina’s rated license.	
Ohio	Step Up to Quality http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/index.php	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSI • COA (After School) • NAC • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA 	Providers earn points to achieve Step 4 and Step 5. Accredited programs receive 5 points.
Oklahoma	Reaching for the Stars http://www.okdhs.org/programsandservices/cc/stars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSI • COA • COA (After School) • NAC • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA • Head Start Performance Standards (compliance) 	<p>Providers can reach a 2-star level by meeting level 1 requirements and being accredited.</p> <p>Providers can reach a 3-star level by meeting all 1, 1+, and 2 star criteria and being accredited.</p>
Pennsylvania	Keystone STARS http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA (After School) • NAEYC • NAFCC 	To reach the STAR 4 level (i.e., the highest level), providers must meet all STARS performance standards, <u>or</u> be accredited and meet STAR 4 Accreditation Standards.

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
Rhode Island	BrightStars http://www.brightstars.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC • NAFCC 	Accreditation is an alternative to an environment rating scale score to achieve the Child's Daily Experience and Context and Process of Learning standards for Levels Three, Four, and Five.
South Carolina	ABC Child Care Program www.scchildcare.org	Accreditation is not included in the QRIS	
Tennessee	Star-Quality Child Care Program http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/adfam/ccrcsq.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC • NAFCC • Other accrediting bodies approved by the Department of Human Services 	To determine the star level, 1–3 points are given for each area of compliance with standards. One point is added to the rating score if the provider is accredited.
Texas	Texas Rising Star Provider Certification http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/childcare/provcert.html Only licensed or registered providers that have an agreement with a local Workforce Development Board to serve Texas Workforce Commission subsidized children participate in Texas Rising Star Certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSI • COA (After School) • NAC • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA 	Child care providers who have attained national accreditations may be certified as a TRS Provider without going through the TRS Provider assessment process and are initially enrolled as a Four-Star or fully certified provider
Vermont	STep Ahead Recognition System for Child Care Programs (STARS) http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/stars/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA (After School) • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA 	Accredited providers automatically earn a certain number of points in specific arenas. Because of the accredited program articulation of points in each arena, the STARS Application forms are streamlined for accredited programs.

State	QRIS Name and Web Site	Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	Use of Accreditation in QRIS
Virginia	Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) http://www.smartbeginnings.org/qrisc	Accreditation is not included in the QRIS.	
Washington	Early Achievers http://www.del.wa.gov/care/qrisc/	Accreditation is not included in this QRIS	
Wisconsin	YoungStar http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Madison Accreditation • COA • Early Learning Leaders • NAEYC • NAFCC • NECPA 	Accreditation is an alternative pathway to achieving 4 Star or 5 Star status for programs, depending on the accreditation received.

The National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement does not endorse any non-Federal practice, organization, publication, or resource.