



QRIS Definition and 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. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a High Priority Performance Goal to increase the number of States and Territories with strong quality rating and improvement systems.

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.

State QRIS Web Sites

States Implementing QRIS

The table below provides the Web sites for 36 States that are implementing a statewide QRIS model. For some States, it is noted if the QRIS is being revised, operating only in limited areas of the State, or is available only for specific types of providers (e.g. providers receiving public funding).

States	System Names and Web Sites
Arizona	Quality First http://qualityfirstaz.com/

States	System Names and Web Sites
Arkansas	Better Beginnings http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/
Colorado	Qualistar Rating System http://www.qualistar.org/home.html
	QRIS Redesign http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-ChildYouthFam/CBON/1251583639294
Delaware	Delaware Stars for Early Success http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/
District of Columbia	Going for the Gold http://www.learnDC.org
Georgia	Quality Rated https://qualityrated.dec.state.ga.us/
Idaho	IdahoSTARS Quality Rating & Improvement System http://idahostars.org/?q=gris
Illinois	Illinois Quality Counts http://www.ilqualitycounts.com/qrs/overview
	ExceleRate Illinois QRIS. http://excelerateillinois.com/ As of July 1, 2013, centers are transitioning to this new QRIS. ExceleRate Illinois for licensed family child care providers will be implemented in 2015.
Indiana	Paths to QUALITY http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/2554.htm
Iowa	Iowa Quality Rating System http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/iqrs/
Kansas	Kansas Quality Rating Improvement System http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/provider_kgris.html Operating only in some areas of the State.

States	System Names and Web Sites
Kentucky	STARS for KIDS NOW Child Care Quality Rating System http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc/stars/default.htm
Louisiana	Quality Start http://www.qrslouisiana.org/
Maine	Quality for ME http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm
Maryland	Maryland EXCELS http://www.marylandexcels.org/ Implementation of this revised QRIS system began in July 2013.
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/qrif/
Michigan	Great Start to Quality http://www.greatstarttoquality.org/
Minnesota	Parent Aware http://www.parentawareratings.org/ Operating only in some areas of the State. Statewide expansion underway.
Mississippi	Mississippi Child Care Quality Stars http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/programs/qualitystars/index.php
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.
Nevada	Silver State Stars QRIS http://www.nvsilverstatestars.org

States	System Names and Web Sites
New Hampshire	New Hampshire's Quality Rating and Improvement System http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf/licensedplus/index.htm
New Mexico	AIM HIGH https://www.newmexicokids.org/content/caregivers_and_educators/aim_high/
	FOCUS https://www.newmexicokids.org/content/caregivers_and_educators/focus/ A pilot of this revised QRIS is currently underway. An evaluation of the pilot began in February 2013.
New York	QUALITYstarsNY http://qualitystarsny.org/ Operating only in some areas of the State.
North Carolina	North Carolina Star Rated License System http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv_sn2_ov_sr.asp
Ohio	Step Up to Quality http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/index.php Implementation of this revised QRIS system began in October 2013.
Oklahoma	Reaching for the Stars http://www.okdhs.org/programsandservices/cc/stars/
Pennsylvania	Keystone STARS http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS
Rhode Island	BrightStars http://www.brightstars.org/providers/brightstars-quality-rating/
South Carolina	ABC Child Care Program www.scchildcare.org

States	System Names and Web Sites
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.
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.
Vermont	STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/stars/
Virginia	Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) http://www.smartbeginnings.org/gris
Washington	Early Achievers http://www.del.wa.gov/care/gris/
Wisconsin	YoungStar http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/

Additional States - QRIS Pilots, Planning Efforts, or Local Systems

The following table lists States that have a pilot or field test of a QRIS underway, are engaged in planning to develop a QRIS, or operate multiple local QRIS models. It should be noted that not all of the States conducting pilots or planning QRIS have a Web site with information about those activities. There may be additional States piloting, planning, locally operating QRIS that are not included in the table below.

States	System Names and Web Sites
Alabama	Alabama Quality STARS Pilot No Web site available
Alaska	Alaska Quality Rating and Improvement System Reports http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/reports.aspx

States	System Names and Web Sites
California	Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funding network of Regional Leadership Consortia to implement or develop QRIS in local areas. http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/rttelcapproach.asp
Florida	Florida has several QRIS projects operating in counties across the State. These Web sites are a sample of these projects: Duval County, Guiding Stars of Duval: http://www.elcofduval.org/g sod.asp Hillsborough County, Quality Counts: http://www.elhc.org/quality_counts.html Miami-Dade, Quality Counts: http://www.elcmdm.org/QualityCounts/index.htm Palm Beach County, Quality Counts: http://providers.cscpbcc.org/become-a-quality-counts-program Sarasota County, Look for the Stars: http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org/look_for_the_stars.htm
Hawaii	Quality Rating and Improvement System Pilot https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/child-care-program/qrisc/
Nebraska	Step Up to Quality Child Care Act (legislation for QRIS passed in June 2013) http://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/Current/PDF/Slip/LB507.pdf
New Jersey	Build NJ: Partners for Early Learning http://www.acnj.org/main.asp?uri=1003&di=1720
North Dakota	Early Childhood Rating and Improvement System (pilot) http://ndc.ndgrowingfutures.org/ndc.default.aspx
Oregon	Oregon’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (pilot) http://www.wou.edu/tri/QRIS/
Puerto Rico	Pasitos Pilot Project http://pasitospr.org/proyecto/ (Note: site is in Spanish)
Utah	Care About Childcare (CAC) http://careaboutchildcare.utah.gov/ Utah posts profiles of child care providers with information about how the provider meets a set of quality indicators and the licensing record.

States	System Names and Web Sites
Virgin Islands	Quality Rating and Improvement System Pilot No Web site available

The Office of Child Care's National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.