



QRIS STANDARDS, LEVELS, AND RATING SYSTEMS

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

QRIS Standards, Levels, and Rating Systems

Taken together, **standards** are used to assign ratings to programs that participate in QRIS, providing parents, policymakers, funders, and the public with information about the level of quality. States typically use licensing standards as the base of the system. 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 rating levels and the number of standards identified in each level. Most QRIS award easily recognizable symbols, such as stars, to programs to indicate the levels of quality. Standards used to assign ratings are based on research about the characteristics of programs that produce positive child outcomes.

Determining the number of **rating levels** in a QRIS often depends on the difference between the criteria in licensing requirements and those in the most rigorous set of standards currently in place (e.g., national accreditation or prekindergarten standards). If the difference is great, then more steps may be needed to allow programs to experience success by making progress toward higher quality. In the development of a QRIS, States must discuss the progression from one level to the next higher level (e.g., the size of the steps between the levels and how long it will take a program to progress from one level to the next). Most QRIS have a range of two to five levels of standards above licensing requirements. The most common number of levels is five.

States have developed three **methods for assigning ratings** based on the standards:

1. **Building block approach.** In this approach, all the standards in each level must be met for programs to move to the next level.
 - There are 17 States using this approach: Arkansas, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia.
2. **Point system.** In this approach, every standard is assigned a number of points, with a combined score used to determine the quality rating.
 - There are 11 States using this approach: Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Vermont, and Wisconsin.
3. **Combination approach.** In this approach, a combination of the building block approach and the point system determines program ratings. Often, the first levels are building blocks; higher levels are earned through a point system.
 - There are eight States using this approach: Delaware, Iowa, Louisiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Minnesota, Nevada, and Washington.

The following table shows the categories of standards and levels for 36 States that are implementing a statewide QRIS model, and describes how ratings are assigned. Included are notes about implementation when appropriate (e.g., the QRIS is operating in specific geographic areas).

Table 1. Categories of Standards and Levels for QRIS

State, QRIS Name, and Web Site	Categories of QRIS Quality Standards	QRIS Levels	Rating Assignment Method
<p>Arizona Quality First http://qualityfirstaz.com/</p>	<p>Standards are designated for centers, FCC homes, or all programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Administration ■ Administrator/staff/provider qualifications/professional development ■ Learning environment ■ Environmental assessment ■ Child/youth health and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One star (Rising Star) ■ Two stars (Progressing Star) ■ Three stars (Quality) ■ Four stars (Quality Plus) ■ Five stars (Highest Quality) 	<p>Point system: Programs must meet licensing requirements before being rated at any level. Ratings for the first two levels are based on average programs scores on the environment rating scales (ERS). For levels 3–5, programs are rated based on achieving specific ERS and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores and earning points in the three standards areas on the Quality First Points Scale.</p>
<p>Arkansas Better Beginnings http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers, family child care (FCC) homes, and school-age programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Administration ■ Administrator/staff/provider qualifications and professional development ■ Learning environment ■ Environmental assessment ■ Child health and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 	<p>Building blocks: To be eligible to participate, providers must have licenses in good standing. For Level 2, providers must meet the requirements of that level and those of Level 1. Level 3 can be achieved by meeting all of the standards in Levels 1 and 2.</p>

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<p>Colorado Colorado Shines http://www.coloradoshines.com/</p>	<p>There is one set of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development ■ Family Partnerships ■ Leadership, Management and Administration ■ Learning Environment ■ Child Health 	<p>Licensed child care programs serving children prior to kindergarten entry will be required to participate in the Colorado Shines system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Star 1 ■ Star 2 ■ Star 3 ■ Star 4 ■ Star 5 	<p>Combination: Points must be gained within each of the five areas with a specified minimum number of points. The breakdown of the points is documented within the Standards and Points Framework applicable to the program or provider. Additional points may be earned in optional categories: 1) Home Language; 2) Additional Professional Staff 3) Professional Leadership and 4) Infant and Toddler CLASS Observations. The provider may choose to apply up to two (2) earned optional points to only one of the five standard areas in order to increase the total score of that standards area.</p>
<p>Delaware Stars for Early Success http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for early care and education programs, FCC programs, large FCC programs, and school-age only programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Qualifications and professional development ■ Learning environment and curriculum ■ Family and community partnerships ■ Management and administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Starting with Stars (Star Level 1) ■ Star Level 2 ■ Star Level 3 ■ Star Level 4 ■ Star Level 5 	<p>Combination: For licensed child care programs, they are accepted into Stars (Starting with Stars) if they are in good standing with the Office of Child Care Licensing, the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Child Care Subsidy (Purchase of Care). Programs have 1 year to complete the standards for Star Level 2. For levels 3–5, the level is determined by the total number of points earned (points may be earned in any one of 4 standards area) and required minimal scoring on the Environment Rating Scale.</p>

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<p>District of Columbia Going for the Gold http://www.learnedc.org</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers and FCC homes within one standards document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accreditation ■ Compliance with licensing regulations ■ Qualifications and training (for staff, directors, and providers) ■ Staff compensation (for centers only) ■ Parent involvement and consumer satisfaction ■ Learning environment ■ Home environment/home evaluation (for FCC only) ■ Early Learning Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bronze ■ Silver ■ Gold 	<p>Building blocks: Going for the Gold is a voluntary system. Providers at the Bronze level must have a current license and meet some additional standards. For each remaining level, providers must meet the requirements of that level and those of previous levels. Providers at the Gold level are accredited.</p>
<p>Georgia Quality Rated https://qualityrated.dec.state.ga.us/</p>	<p>There is one set of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Standard 1: Director and Teacher Qualifications/Family Child Care Director Qualifications and PDR Verification ■ Standard 2: Teacher : Student Ratios ■ Standard 3: Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity ■ Standard 4: Family Partnerships ■ Standard 5: Intentional Teaching Practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 	<p>Point system: Participation in Quality Rated is voluntary. To be eligible to participate, programs must be compliant with child care licensing/registration rules. Providers demonstrate meeting the standards by submitting documentation through an online portfolio. Points are earned based on the documentation in the portfolio and an ERS observation. Bonus points are awarded for certain national accreditations.</p>

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<p>Idaho IdahoSTARS Quality Rating & Improvement System http://idahostars.org/?q=gris</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environment ■ Education ■ Professional development ■ Inclusion ■ Strengthening families ■ Child-staff ratio ■ Group size ■ Business practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 Star ■ 2 Stars ■ 3 Stars ■ 4 Stars ■ 5 Stars 	<p>Composite system: All providers must be licensed to participate. A facility's overall rating is determined by the total number of points earned across the eight Quality Standards. In this composite system, points are awarded for meeting all the requirements in each tier. In order to earn one star, a facility must earn at least one point in each standard. To earn five stars, a facility must meet all requirements in tiers 1-3 and earn enough points for five stars.</p>

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<p>Illinois Quality Counts for license-exempt and licensed family child care providers http://www.ilqualitycounts.com/grs/overview</p> <p>ExceleRate Illinois for cross-sector center-based programs and licensed family child care http://www.exceleRateillinoisproviders.com/</p>	<p>In Quality Counts, there are separate sets of standards for programs in QRIS. The categories of standards for licensed family child care are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning environment ■ Program administration ■ Staff/provider qualifications and training <p>License-exempt FCC home provider standards consist of three training tiers.</p> <p>In ExceleRate Illinois, there are several standards to be met for the Bronze, Silver and Gold Circles of Quality. This can be achieved through various paths of evidence.</p> <p>For center-based programs, there are 15 standards across four domains. For licensed family child care, there are 17 standards across four domains. The domains for both types of programs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teaching and Learning ■ Family and Community Engagement ■ Leadership and Management ■ Qualifications and Continuing Education 	<p>For licensed family child care homes in Quality Counts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Star Level 1 ■ Star Level 2 ■ Star Level 3 ■ Star Level 4 <p>For license-exempt homes in Quality Counts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Training Tier 1 ■ Training Tier 2 ■ Training Tier 3 <p>For licensed child care centers, Head Start/Early Head Start, Preschool For All and center based prevention initiative programs in ExceleRate Illinois:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Licensed Circle of Quality ■ Bronze Circle of Quality ■ Silver Circle of Quality ■ Gold Circle of Quality <p>Awards of Excellence can also be achieved in 5 areas after the Gold Circle of Quality is achieved.</p>	<p>Building blocks: For Quality Counts QRS, family child care providers must be currently licensed to apply at any Star Level, unless they are legally exempt. Licensed providers apply for a particular Star Level when they have met requirements. License-exempt providers must meet the requirements for the previous training tier before moving on to the next. For ExceleRate Illinois, all licensed center based providers are recognized at the Licensed Circle of Quality. Programs must prepare for and apply to a Circle of Quality above this level.</p>

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<p>Indiana Paths to QUALITY http://www.in.gov/fssa/2554.htm</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for licensed child care centers and FCC homes and unlicensed registered ministries. Indiana does not categorize its standards. The following is a list of topics covered by the standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Licensing Compliance ■ Level of Education/Specialized Training ■ Structural Quality ■ Process Quality ■ Use of Authentic or Naturalistic Assessment Methods ■ Plans and Environmental Accommodations for Children with Special Needs ■ Program Policies and Procedures ■ Director/Lead Caregiver Professional Development ■ Parent Teacher Communication ■ National Accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4 	<p>Building blocks: Paths to QUALITY is a voluntary system. Level 1 requires that providers have current licenses that are in good standing; child care ministries must be registered. For each remaining level, providers must meet the requirements of that level and those of previous levels. Level 4 requires accreditation.</p>
<p>Iowa Iowa Quality Rating System http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/iqrs/</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Professional development ■ Health and safety ■ Environment ■ Family and community partnerships ■ Leadership/administration (for centers only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4 ■ Level 5 	<p>Combination: The Iowa Child Care Quality Rating System is a voluntary system. To meet the standards for Level 1, providers must be licensed. For Level 2, all Level 1 and 2 criteria must be met. For Levels 3–5, all Level 1 and 2 criteria must be met, and providers must earn a minimum of one point in each of the four (centers have five) categories of standards. For Levels 3–5, the level is determined by the total number of points earned. To achieve a Level 5, a minimum ERS score of 5.0 in each assessed classroom must be met.</p>

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<p>Kansas Kansas Quality Rating Improvement System http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/for-child-care-early-education-staff/quality-initiatives/ Operating only in some areas of the State.</p>	<p>There is one set of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning environment ■ Family partnerships ■ Training & education ■ Ratios & group size ■ Program accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 Star ■ 2 Stars ■ 3 Stars ■ 4 Stars ■ 5 Stars 	<p>Point system: Providers accumulate points in the four standard areas. A maximum of 10 points can be earned in each area. The learning environment score must be at least two points to receive a star level above 1 Star. An additional two points are earned for accreditation. The highest level requires 34-42 points.</p>
<p>Kentucky STARS for KIDS NOW Child Care Quality Rating System http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc/stars/default.htm</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for licensed child care centers and FCC homes and certified FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ratios ■ Curriculum ■ Training ■ Regulatory compliance ■ Personnel (for centers only) ■ Business practices (for FCC only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4 	<p>Building blocks: Provider license/certification must be in good standing at all levels. For each remaining level, providers must meet the requirements of that level and those of previous levels. Accreditation is one of the criteria for the level 4 curriculum standards.</p>
<p>Louisiana Quality Start http://www.grslouisiana.org/</p>	<p>There are standards only for child care centers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Administration practices ■ Family and community involvement ■ Program ■ Staff qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Foundation 1 star ■ Foundation 2 stars ■ 3 stars ■ 4 stars ■ 5 stars 	<p>Combination: To earn one star, providers must be licensed. Additional requirements must be met in the four categories of standards to earn two stars. For three–five stars, providers must earn points in two component areas (i.e., staff qualifications and program). An additional quality point can be earned by meeting additional administrative practice and family/community involvement standards.</p>

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<p>Maine Quality for ME http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm</p>	<p>There are separate standards for child care centers, FCC homes, school-age care programs, and Head Start programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Compliance history/licensing status ■ Learning environment/developmentally appropriate practice ■ Program evaluation ■ Staffing and professional development ■ Administrative policies and procedures ■ Parent/family involvement ■ Family resources ■ Authentic assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Step 1 ■ Step 2 ■ Step 3 ■ Step 4 	<p>Building blocks: Step 1 requires meeting licensing standards, and the remaining steps have standards that require programs to not have substantiated serious licensing violations within certain time periods. For Steps 2-4, providers must meet the requirements of that step and those of previous steps. Step 4 requires accreditation.</p>
<p>Maryland 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 became required in 2015.</p>	<p>There are four separate standards: Child Care Centers (including Head Start and non-public nursery schools), Family Child Care (including Large Family Child Care Homes), School-Age Only (programs serving only school-age children), and Public Pre-Kindergarten. Note: Revised standards will be available in 2014, reflecting changes based upon feedback from the field test and stakeholder groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Licensing and Compliance ■ Staff Qualifications and Professional Development ■ Accreditation and Rating Scales ■ Developmentally Appropriate Learning and Practice ■ Administrative Policies and Practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4 ■ Level 5 	<p>Building blocks: To achieve a check level 1 rating, a program must be fully licensed, open, and operating. To achieve the rest of the check levels, the program must be licensed, open, and operating for at least six months, show substantial compliance with child care regulations, and have no enforcement actions pending. To achieve and publish a rating at any level, all criteria within that level must be achieved and verified.</p>

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<p>Massachusetts Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/gris/gris.html</p>	<p>To address the unique characteristics of quality found in different types of programs, the QRIS Standards have been customized for Center Based/School Based programs, Family Child Care providers, and After School/Out of School Time programs. The MA QRIS standards include five key indicators of quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Curriculum and learning ■ Safe, healthy, indoor and outdoor Environments ■ Workforce qualifications and professional development ■ Family and community engagement ■ Leadership, management, and administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4 	<p>Building blocks: The Massachusetts QRIS is a voluntary system. Level 1 is awarded to center-based and family child care providers that are licensed in good standing or meet licensing requirements if legally exempt. For each remaining level, providers must meet the requirements of that level and those of previous levels.</p>
<p>Michigan Great Start to Quality http://www.greatstarttoquality.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff qualifications and professional development ■ Family and community partnerships ■ Administration and management ■ Environment ■ Curriculum and instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Licensed ■ 1 Star and participating ■ 2 Stars ■ 3 Stars ■ 4 Stars ■ 5 Stars 	<p>Point system: Licensing is considered to be the level below a star rating. Quality standards are met to achieve the 2 Star level. The point system is structured such that child care providers need to get a certain number of points in multiple categories to achieve a certain star level. For example, to achieve 3 Stars providers must earn a minimum number of points in 3 of the 5 categories. Five Stars requires points achieved in all 5 categories.</p>

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<p>Minnesota Parent Aware http://www.parentawareratings.org/</p> <p>For non-accredited child care programs, Parent Aware is currently operating in some areas of the STATE; however, Parent Aware will be available statewide to these programs January 1, 2015.</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers and FCC homes, and separate standards for the Accelerated Pathway to Rating for Head Start, accredited child care, school-based pre-kindergarten, early childhood special education, and charter school programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Physical health and well-being ■ Teaching and relationships ■ Assessment of child progress ■ Teacher training and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 Star ■ 2 Stars ■ 3 Stars ■ 4 Stars 	<p>Combination: Full Rating Process Programs must be licensed and have no current negative actions to participate. Programs meeting all standards indicators for 1 and 2 Stars are eligible to apply for a higher star rating. A specific number of points are earned to reach the 3 and 4 Stars levels.</p> <p>Building Block: Accelerated Pathway to Rating Head Start, accredited child care, school based pre-kindergarten, early childhood special education, and charter school programs are eligible for an Accelerated Pathway to Rating where two indicators are met to earn a 4-Star Rating</p>
<p>Mississippi Mississippi Child Care Quality Stars http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/programs/qualitystars/index.php</p>	<p>Standards are only for child care centers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Program administration ■ Professional development ■ Learning environments ■ Parent involvement ■ Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Step 1 Licensing ■ Step 2 ■ Step 3 ■ Step 4 ■ Step 5 	<p>Building blocks: The Child Care Quality Step System is a voluntary system. To meet the standards for Step 1, providers must be licensed. For each remaining level, providers must meet the requirements of that level and those of previous levels.</p>

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<p>Montana Best Beginnings STARS to Quality http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/STARS</p>	<p>The quality rating improvement system for Montana has several arms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workforce Development 2. Quality Rating Improvement System 3. Infrastructure to administer the programs, provide training, coaching, and technical assistance, and to validate the STARS system <p>The matrix is based on 5 categories of quality with criteria that must be met at each level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Education, Qualifications, and Training ■ High Quality Supportive Environments ■ Staff/Caregiver-to-Child Ratio and Group Size ■ Family/Community Partnerships ■ Leadership and Program Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ STAR 1 ■ STAR 2 ■ STAR 3 ■ STAR 4 ■ STAR 5 	<p>Building blocks: Programs must be licensed/ registered with the State of MT to participate in the QRIS field test. Programs must meet all criteria to be awarded a level and/or advance levels</p>
<p>Nevada Silver State Stars QRIS http://www.nvsilverstatestars.org</p>	<p>Standards are only for child care centers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Policies & procedures ■ Administration & staff development ■ Health & safety ■ Family & community partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One star ■ Two stars ■ Three stars ■ Four stars ■ Five stars 	<p>Combination: A current license is required at all levels. A center's star rating is based on a combination of meeting the required criteria and ERS scores. To achieve Two -Four Stars, centers meet a specific number of quality indicators from each of the four categories. Centers that are accredited or Head Start Grantees, and meet additional criteria, can achieve Five Stars.</p>

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<p>New Hampshire Licensed Plus http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf/licensedplus/index.htm</p>	<p>There is one set of standards for licensed child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regulation ■ Administration and business practices ■ Learning environment ■ Parent/family involvement ■ Children with special needs ■ Professional development ■ Staff qualifications and compensation ■ Program evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Licensed ■ Licensed plus ■ Accredited 	<p>Building blocks: Licensed plus is the level between meeting basic licensing requirements and being accredited.</p>

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<p>New Mexico AIM HIGH https://www.newmexicokids.org/content/caregivers_and_educators/aim_high/</p> <p>FOCUS https://www.newmexicokids.org/content/caregivers_and_educators/focus/</p>	<p>In AIM HIGH, there is one set of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff qualifications, evaluation, and communication ■ Environment ■ Observation and documentation of children’s progress and curriculum planning ■ Staff/caregiver professional development plan ■ Family involvement plan ■ Administrative policies ■ Employee compensation and benefits ■ Ratios and group size ■ Accreditation <p>In FOCUS, there are separate sets of standards for center-based programs, family child care homes, and out of school time programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Foundations of Quality- which includes ratios, health promotion, staff qualifications and professional development ■ Quality Practices that Support Children’s Growth, Development, and Learning- which includes the learning environment, assessment and curriculum, reflective leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3-star ■ 4-star ■ 5-star 	<p>Building blocks: All licensed providers in AIM HIGH and FOCUS Pilot Phase are required to comply with licensing regulations and earn a 2-star license. For the remaining voluntary levels, providers must meet requirements of previous levels. Accreditation or meeting FOCUS TQRIS Level 5 standards is required to obtain a 5-star license.</p>
<p>New York QUALITYstarsNY http://qualitystarsny.org/</p> <p>Operating only in some areas of the State.</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers, FCC homes, and early childhood programs in public schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning environment ■ Family engagement ■ Qualifications and experience ■ Management and leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One Star ■ Two Stars ■ Three Stars ■ Four Stars ■ Five Stars 	<p>Point system: Regulated providers receive a One Star rating. Programs or providers that wish to advance beyond One Star earn points for meeting standards in each of four standards categories. At least 10% of the total possible points must be earned in each category.</p>

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<p>North Carolina North Carolina Star Rated License System http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv_sn2_ov_sr.asp</p>	<p>Program and Education Standards for Child Care Centers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Operational and personnel policies ■ Caregiving activities for preschool-aged children ■ Parent participation ■ Night care ■ Space requirements ■ Staff-child ratios ■ Environment rating scale assessment ■ Education levels of staff <p>Program and Education Standards for Family Child Care Homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Operational and personnel policies ■ Environment rating scale assessment ■ Reduced number of infants enrolled ■ Coursework completed by the provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-star license ■ 2-star license ■ 3-star license ■ 4-star license ■ 5-star license 	<p>Point system:</p> <p>A rating of one star means that a child care program meets North Carolina’s minimum licensing standards. Points are earned in two standard components—education and program—to obtain each level of the star rated license. Providers may choose to meet additional education or programmatic criteria to earn one Quality Point. This Quality Point will be added to the total points earned in program standards and staff education to determine the total number of stars earned.</p>
<p>Ohio Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/index.php</p> <p>Implementation of this revised QRIS system began in October 2013.</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers and Type A (large) homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Curriculum & planning ■ Child screening & assessment ■ Interactions & environment ■ Administrative leadership practices ■ Staff qualifications & professional development ■ Family & community partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One star ■ Two stars ■ Three stars ■ Four stars ■ Five stars 	<p>Combination:</p> <p>Programs must be licensed and not have any serious risk noncompliance findings during their last licensing visit to participate. One-, two- and three-star programs must meet all standards at the lower levels before advancing to the next. Beyond three stars, programs will be awarded points based on their adherence to three-star requirements and their ability to earn additional points. Programs must achieve a minimum of at least one point in each of the domains and can earn extra points for accreditation, lower staff-child ratios and group size.</p>

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<p>Oklahoma Reaching for the Stars http://www.okdhs.org/programsandservices/cc/stars</p>	<p>There are separate standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Licensing status and compliance ■ Administrative ■ Qualifications (for directors, staff, and providers) ■ Professional development ■ Learning environment ■ Family engagement ■ Program evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One star ■ One star plus ■ Two stars ■ Three stars 	<p>Building blocks: All licensed providers are automatically designated as one star in Reaching for the Stars. For each remaining level, providers must meet the requirements of that level and those of previous levels. Three-star providers are accredited.</p>
<p>Pennsylvania Keystone STARS http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers, group FCC homes, and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff qualifications and professional development ■ Learning program ■ Partnerships with family and community ■ Leadership and management ■ Continuous quality improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ STAR 1 ■ STAR 2 ■ STAR 3 ■ STAR 4 	<p>Building blocks: Child Care providers in Keystone STARS must have current licenses. For each level 1 through 4, providers must meet the requirements of that level and those of previous levels. To reach the STAR 4 level (i.e., the highest level), providers must meet all STARS performance standards, or be nationally accredited and meet STAR 4A accreditation standards.</p>
<p>Rhode Island BrightStars http://www.brightstars.org/providers/brightstars-quality-rating/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child’s daily experience ■ Teaching and learning ■ Staff-child ratio and group size ■ Family communication and involvement ■ Staff qualifications ■ Program management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level One ■ Level Two ■ Level Three ■ Level Four ■ Level Five 	<p>Building blocks: To participate in BrightStars, providers must have a current, valid license. Preschools that are not licensed must have approval from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The licensing requirements and preschool approval are the standards for Level One. The four remaining levels have standards that build on each other. National accreditation or environment rating scale scores are used for assessing the learning environment.</p>

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<p>South Carolina ABC Child Care Program http://www.scchildcare.org</p>	<p>There is one set of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regulatory requirements ■ Supervision of children ■ Administration ■ Staff qualifications and development ■ Health and safety ■ Menu planning and meal service ■ Parent/guardian involvement ■ Staff-child ratios (Level B) ■ Staff-parent interaction (Level B) ■ Staff-child interactions (Level B) ■ Activities (Level B) ■ Physical environment (Level B) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level A+ (highest level) ■ Level A ■ Level B+ ■ Level B ■ Level C (licensing) 	<p>Building blocks: Licensing forms the basis for the QRIS, although in some circumstances exempt providers are paid at Level C. All providers are evaluated using ERS (at Level A) or state-developed assessment instruments (at Levels B and C). Any regulated provider may be rated in ABC Quality and quality for incentives, supports, and services; payments to those who care for subsidy children are based on the level of quality they are awarded.</p>

State, QRIS Name, and Web Site	Categories of QRIS Quality Standards	QRIS Levels	Rating Assignment Method
<p>Tennessee Star-Quality Child Care Program http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/adfam/ccrcsq.html</p>	<p>There are separate sets of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Director qualifications (for centers only) ■ Professional development ■ Developmental learning ■ Parent/family involvement ■ Ratio and group size ■ Staff compensation (for centers only) ■ Program assessment ■ Business management (for FCC only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complies with licensing regulations ■ One star ■ Two stars ■ Three stars 	<p>Combination: All licensed and approved child care providers in Tennessee are evaluated on the quality standards. Providers are rated on each standard and given a report card with the results. Eligible providers can participate in the Star-Quality program, which is voluntary. Providers meet the first level by complying with licensing regulations. To determine the star level, one–three points are given for each area of compliance with standards. One point is added to the rating score if the provider is accredited.</p>
<p>Texas Texas Rising Star Provider Certification https://texasrisingstar.org/wordpress/</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>There are separate standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Licensing compliance ■ Director qualifications (centers only) ■ Caregiver staff qualifications ■ Staff orientation ■ Staff training ■ Group size ■ Curriculum/activities ■ Caregiver-child interaction ■ Physical environment ■ Health and safety ■ Nutrition/meal time ■ Parental involvement 	<p>For centers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two-Star Certification ■ Three-Star Certification ■ Four-Star Certification <p>For FCC homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provisionally Certified ■ Fully Certified 	<p>Point system: To participate, programs must meet and complain compliance with applicable child care licensing standards. A system of scoring a facility for certification is based on meeting a certain number of measures for each standards criterion. For centers, individual care groups must meet the measures in designated criteria for the facility to achieve the certification level. Otherwise, the entire center is certified at the level of the lowest scoring group. For FCC homes, a number of measures that must be met in each standard area is specified for each level of certification.</p>

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<p>Vermont STep Ahead Recognition System for Child Care Programs (STARS) http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/stars/</p>	<p>There is one set of standards for child care centers and FCC homes, although there are customized STARS applications based on program type.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Qualifications and training ■ Families and community ■ Program practices ■ Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 star ■ 2 stars ■ 3 stars ■ 4 stars ■ 5 stars 	<p>Point system: Providers must be licensed or registered to be eligible to participate. Zero to five points are awarded in five arenas of action (i.e., standards). Each star level requires a range of points: 1-4 points = 1 star, 5-8 points = 2 stars, 9-11 points = 3 stars, 12-14 points = 4 stars, 15-17 points = 5 stars. Accredited programs automatically earn a certain number of points in specific arenas of action.</p>
<p>Virginia Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) http://www.smartbeginnings.org/gris</p>	<p>Standards categories for classroom-based programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Education, qualifications, and training ■ Interactions ■ Structure ■ Environment and instruction <p>Standards categories for FCC homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Education, qualifications, and training ■ Environment and interactions ■ Structure ■ Parent partnerships and transition practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rising Star ■ Star Level 1 ■ Star Level 2 ■ Star Level 3 ■ Star Level 4 ■ Star Level 5 	<p>Combination: Providers must be in good standing with all regulations (e.g., licensing, Head Start Performance Standards). Providers are awarded points in four performance standards, the sum of which determines the star rating. Within the four performance standards, each Star level builds upon the previous level. Assessments consist of a review of documentation and on-site observation(s) by trained raters.</p>
<p>Washington Early Achievers http://www.del.wa.gov/care/gris/</p>	<p>There is one set of standards for child care centers and FCC homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child outcomes ■ Facility curriculum and learning environment and interactions ■ Professional development and training ■ Family engagement and partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4 ■ Level 5 	<p>Combination: For Level 1, the facility must be licensed or have recognized, approved certification (Military, Head Start, ECEAP, Tribal). At Level 2, providers meet standards related to professional development and facility management. Points are earned to achieve levels 3, 4, and 5.</p>

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<p>Wisconsin YoungStar http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regulatory compliance ■ Education ■ Environment and curriculum ■ Business and professional practices ■ Child health and wellness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One Star ■ Two Stars ■ Three Stars ■ Four Stars ■ Five Stars 	<p>Combination: One Star programs are out of regulatory compliance. Programs not in regulatory compliance would not be able to earn points in YoungStar until coming into compliance with licensing and certification. Providers accumulate points in the categories of standards to earn a YoungStar rating. There are minimum quality indicators that must be met at each Star level in addition to a minimum number of points that providers must earn in each Star level before moving to the next.</p>

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