

Early Learning Guidelines in QRIS Standards

This material was developed under a previous contract with the Office of Child Care. While these materials are up to date, the National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement plans to issue an Information Product later this year that will update and/or expand on these materials. The National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement does not endorse any non-Federal practice, organization, publication, or resource.

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, QRISs 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.

QRISs 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 and ELGs

Thirteen States implementing a statewide QRIS include references to early learning guidelines (ELGs) in their QRIS standards. ELGs identify outcomes in language, literacy, mathematics, and other academic and developmental domains for young children. There are several ways that States have incorporated ELGs into the multiple levels of their QRIS standards, for example,

- Nine States (DE, IN, MA, ME, MS, NH, OH, TN, WI) require center staff and family child care (FCC) home providers to complete training on implementing the ELGs;
- Seven States (DE, IN, MA, OH, PA, RI, WI) require providers to use a curriculum that is aligned with the ELGs;
- Five States (AR, DE, ME, PA, TN) require providers to use the ELGs for planning activities for children or developing a curriculum;
- Four States (ME, OH, PA, TN) require that providers have a copy of the ELGs available for use;
- Three States (ME, OH, PA) require alignment of the ELGs with child assessment practices; and
- Two States (LA, MS) require that ELGs are implemented in the classroom.

QRIS State Examples

The following State examples summarize how each of these States has incorporated the ELGs into its QRIS standards.

Arkansas

Better Beginnings

<http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/>

The Arkansas Better Beginnings standards about learning environment include a reference to the *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework* and the *Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care*. At Level 2, written daily plans for each group of children should include all areas of development as defined in the ELGs.

- *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework*
<http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/programsupport/pdf/aeceframwork.pdf>
- *Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Car*
<http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/general/infantframework.pdf>
- *Better Beginnings Rule Book*
http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/downloads/BB-Rule-Book_060110.pdf

Delaware

Delaware Stars for Early Success

<http://www.dieec.udel.edu/delaware-stars-participating#>

Stars for Early Success standards about professional development, curriculum, and assessment include references to the *Delaware Early Learning Foundations*. At the 2-Star level, 75 percent of teachers in centers and all FCC providers must complete training on the *Early Learning Foundations*. At the 3-Star level, providers must use the *Early Learning Foundations* for daily activity and lesson planning. At the 4-Star level, centers and FCC homes must implement a curriculum that aligns with the *Early Learning Foundations*.

- Delaware Infant and Toddler Early Learning Foundations: A Curriculum Framework
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/earlychildhood/files/earlychildhood_infant-toddler.pdf
- *Early Care and Education Standards* (see pp. 8–9)
www.dieec.udel.edu/sites/dieec.udel.edu/files/pdfs/stars/ECEstandardsJuly2010_0.pdf
- *Early Learning Foundations for School Success*
<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/programs/earlychildhood/preschool.shtml>
- *Family Child Care and Large Family Child Care Standards* (see pp. 7–8)
www.dieec.udel.edu/sites/dieec.udel.edu/files/pdfs/stars/2010_fcclfcc_standards_revjan10.pdf

Indiana

Paths to QUALITY

<http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/2554.htm>

Indiana's Paths to QUALITY standards on professional development and curriculum include references to *Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children Age Birth to Five*, the ELGs for children birth to 5. Training on the *Foundations* is required at level 2; using a curriculum consistent with the *Foundations* is required at level 3.

- *Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from Birth to Age 5*
http://www.doe.in.gov/primetime/docs/foundations/indiana_foundations.pdf
- *Standards for Participation: Licensed Child Care Centers* (see pp. 3 and 9)
<http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/CentersPTQStandards.pdf>
- *Standards for Participation: Licensed Child Care Homes* (see pp. 3 and 10)
<http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/HomesPTQStandards.pdf>

Louisiana

Quality Start

<http://www.qrslouisiana.org/>

The Quality Start Model standards for programs specify that providers can earn five points for implementation of *Louisiana’s Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth Through Three* and the *Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children*.

- *Louisiana’s Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three*
<http://www.dss.state.la.us/assets/docs/searchable/OFS/LAEarlyLearningGuide.pdf>
- *Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children*
<http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/3014.pdf>
- Quality Start Model
http://www.qrslouisiana.org/qs_model.html

Maine

Quality for ME

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>

Quality for ME standards about learning environment/developmentally appropriate practice include references to *Maine’s Early Childhood Learning Guidelines*. To meet Step 2 standards, child care centers and Head Start programs must have one teacher or staff member responsible for educational programming who has completed training in Maine’s ELGs. Fifty percent of teachers must have completed this training to meet Step 3 standards. At Step 4, each classroom with 3- to 5-year-old children must have a lead teacher who has completed the training on implementing curricula based on the ELGs, and lead teachers must use the ELGs to guide the development of an age-appropriate curriculum for children ages 3 to 5. Evidence of implementation of the guidelines is documented in children’s files and is made available during onsite reviews. Completion of the required training and implementation of guidelines is verified through Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) training registry. The QRIS standards also require the child care program’s curriculum and assessment of children to be linked to Maine’s ELGs for children ages 3 to 5 and for children 6 weeks to 3 years. Copies of curricula and assessments must be kept onsite and made available for review.

For FCC homes to meet the standards for Step 3, the infant and toddler learning guidelines or the *Early Childhood Learning Guidelines* or both must be onsite, available to staff, and referenced during curriculum planning. The Step 4 standards are the same as those for child care centers and Head Start programs.

- *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 Head Start Programs*
http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/quality_headstart.pdf
- *State of Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines*
<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/guidelines.html>
- *Supporting Maine’s Infants & Toddlers: Guidelines for Learning & Development*
<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/documents/infantsandtoddlerguidelines.pdf>

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System

<http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/gris/>

In Massachusetts' QRIS, center- and school-based providers are required to complete training in either the *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* or the *Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers* to achieve Level 3. To achieve Level 4, center-based, school-based, and FCC home providers must use a curriculum that is aligned with either the preschool or infant and toddler ELGs.

- *Center and School Based QRIS Standards*
http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/board_materials/20101214_qris_standards_ctr_based.pdf
- *Family Child Care QRIS Standards*
http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/board_materials/20101214_qris_standards_fcc.pdf
- *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* (2003)
http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/research_planning/guidelines4preschool.pdf
- *Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers*
http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/Workforce_Dev/Layout.pdf

Mississippi

Child Care Quality Step System

<http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/initiatives/qualitystep.htm>

Mississippi's Child Care Quality Step System standards for learning environments include references to the *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines*. In Step 3, the director must be trained on how to use the ELGs; in Step 4, all teaching staff must be trained. At the highest level, Step 5, the ELGs must be fully implemented in all classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds.

- *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for 3 and 4 Year Olds*
<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/id/curriculum/laer/earlylearning.html>
- *Mississippi State Child Care Quality Step System Criteria*
<http://www.qualitystep.msstate.edu/Criteria.pdf>

New Hampshire

Licensed Plus

<http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf/licensedplus/index.htm>

Licensed Plus standards about the learning environment include references to the *New Hampshire Early Learning Guidelines*. Center-based and FCC providers must document that at least one current employee has attended a workshop in the past 12 months about incorporating the ELGs into the learning environment.

- *Licensed Plus Quality Standards*
<http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf/licensedplus/documents/option1standards.pdf>
- *The New Hampshire Early Learning Guidelines*
<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/cdb/documents/earlylearningguidelines.pdf>

Ohio

Step Up to Quality

<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/stepUpQuality.stm>

Ohio's Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) has three steps (levels) and five benchmarks (standard categories), each with several indicators. At the first step, the program must have a copy of *Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines* and *Early Learning Content Standards*. At the second step, the program must align curriculum planning with these guidelines and standards. At the third step, aligned child assessment practices are required. The specialized training benchmark for all steps requires that practitioners have 10 hours of prerequisite training to strengthen core competencies. Practitioners may only use training on the guidelines and standards to meet this indicator.

- *Early Learning Content Standards*
<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1698&ContentID=1629&Content=83592>
- *Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines: Early Experiences Last a Lifetime*
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/InfantToddler.pdf>
- *Step Up to Quality Benchmarks and Indicators for Centers*
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/docs/SUTQ-centerbenchmarks.pdf>
- *Step Up to Quality Benchmarks and Indicators for Type A Homes*
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/docs/proposedTypeAtiers11-19-07.pdf>

Pennsylvania

Keystone STARS (Standards, Training/Professional Development, Assistance, Resources, and Support)

http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS

Keystone STARS standards about child observation, curriculum, and assessment for child care centers and family and group homes include references to the *Pennsylvania Learning Standards*. To meet the standards for Star 1, the program must maintain copies of the appropriate *Learning Standards* for all age groups in the program. At Star 2, programs must use the *Learning Standards* as resources for staff as they plan and document children's learning. At Star 3, providers must implement a learning curriculum that incorporates the *Learning Standards*. At Star 4, programs must align curriculum and assessment tools with the *Learning Standards*.

- *Keystone STARS Performance Standards for Centers*
<http://www.pakeys.org/docs/2011-2012%20Keystone%20STARS%20Performance%20Standards%20for%20Centers.pdf>
- *Keystone STARS Performance Standards for Family Day Care Homes*
<http://www.pakeys.org/docs/2011-2012%20Keystone%20STARS%20Performance%20Standards%20for%20Family%20Child%20Care%20Homes.pdf>
- *Keystone STARS Performance Standards for Group Homes*
<http://www.pakeys.org/docs/2011-2012%20Keystone%20STARS%20Performance%20Standards%20for%20Group%20Homes.pdf>
- *2009 Early Childhood Education Standards*
www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/standards/8709

Rhode Island

BrightStars

<http://www.brightstars.org/>

Rhode Island's BrightStars QRIS has standards for child care centers and FCC homes about the use of a curriculum or curriculum framework for all age groups served, including infants and toddlers. The standards require centers and homes serving preschool-age children to reference the *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards* in a self-study of curriculum to achieve Levels Two and Three. At Levels Four and Five, the preschool curriculum must be aligned with the Early Learning Standards.

- *Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework*
http://www.brightstars.org/providers/documents/BrightStarsCenterFramework120808_000.pdf
- *Family Child Care Quality Framework*
http://www.brightstars.org/providers/documents/BrightStarsFamilyChildCareFramework090109_000.pdf
- *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards*
www.ride.ri.gov/els/doc.asp

Tennessee

Star-Quality Child Care Program

<http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/adfam/ccrcsq.html>

The Star-Quality Child Care Program standards about developmental learning include references to the *Tennessee Early Childhood/Early Learning Developmental Standards*. These QRIS standards, which went into effect in January 2010, require providers to maintain copies of applicable developmental standards onsite and make them available to staff. The director and an increasing percentage of the teaching staff (by QRIS level) must participate in 3 hours of approved training on applicable developmental learning standards. In addition, the director must observe and document the use of the standards. In FCC homes, the caregiver must document the use of applicable developmental standards annually.

- *Star-Quality Child Care Program: Report Card for Child Care Centers*
www.state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/star-centers.pdf
- *Star-Quality Child Care Program: Report Card for Family and Group Child Care Homes*
www.state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/star-family&group.pdf
- *Tennessee Early Childhood/Early Learning Developmental Standards*
<http://www.tennessee.gov/education/ci/earlychildhood/index.shtml>

Wisconsin

YoungStar

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/default.htm>

Providers participating in YoungStar have the option to earn points for the learning environment and curriculum standards by using a curriculum that is aligned with the *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards* (WMELS) and/or completing training in WMELS.

- *YoungStar Minimum Point Requirements*
http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/minimum_points_required.pdf
- *YoungStar QRIS Quality Indicator Point Detail for Group Programs*
http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/point_detail_group.pdf
- *YoungStar QRIS Quality Indicator Point Detail for Family Programs*
http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/point_detail_family.pdf

- *YoungStar QRIS Quality Indicator Point Detail for School-Age Programs*
http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/point_detail_schoolage.pdf
- *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (2008)*
<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/fscp/pdf/ec-wmels-bk.pdf>