QRIS 101: Everything You Want to Know About QRIS but Are Afraid to Ask

QRIS National Conference
July 16, 2018

Welcome and Introductions

Objectives

- Increase understanding of QRIS at the national and state levels
- Explore common QRIS elements and gain knowledge about state approaches
- Discuss QRIS trends and innovations

Myth Busters!

What Is a QRIS?

- Is a **<u>systematic framework</u>** for evaluating, improving, and communicating the level of quality in early and school-age care settings
- Builds on a foundation of licensing
- Has multiple steps or levels of increasing standards
- Offers support and incentives for reaching higher levels
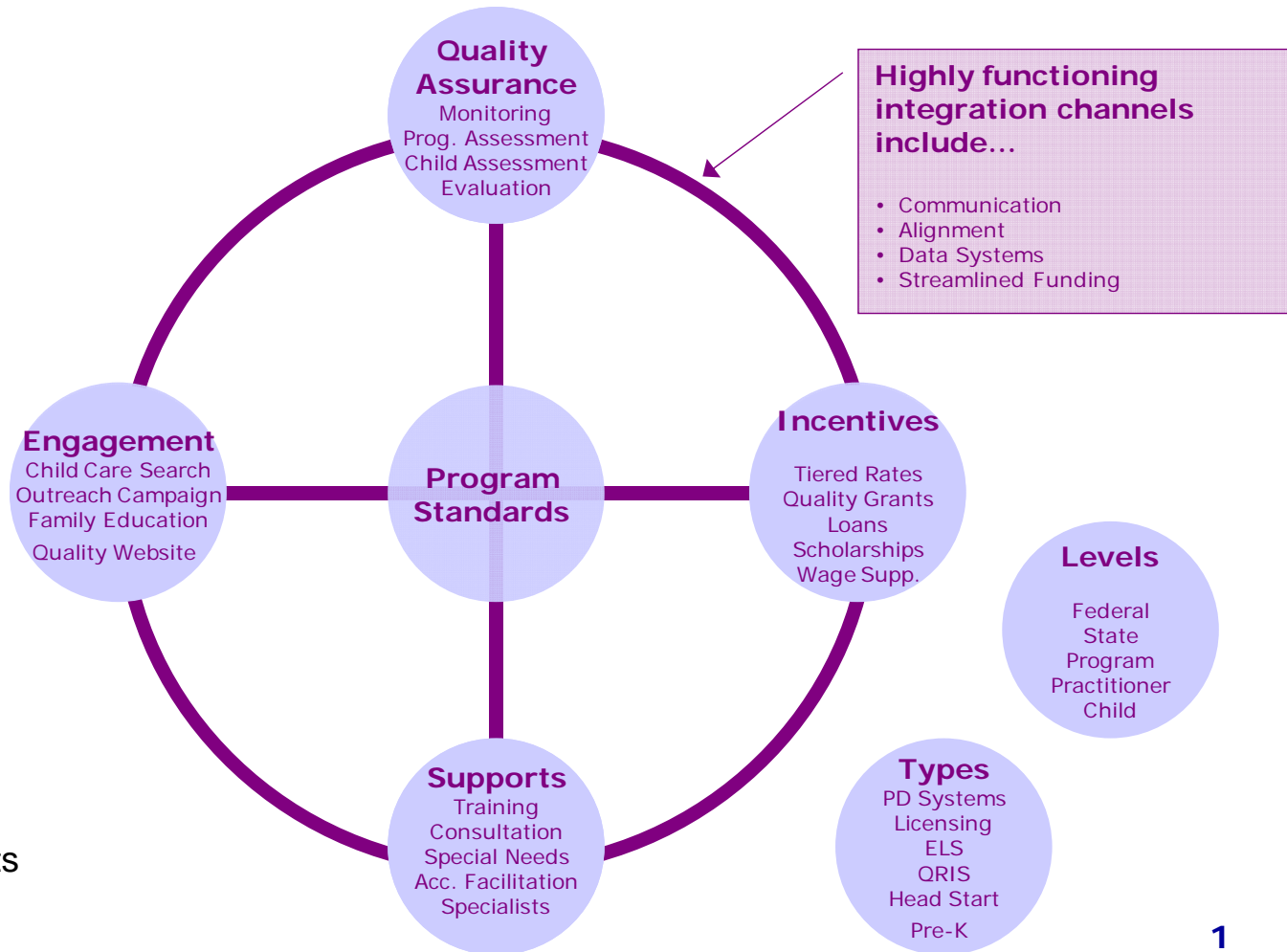- Provides easily recognizable symbols for consumer education

System Alignment

QRIS System Linkages
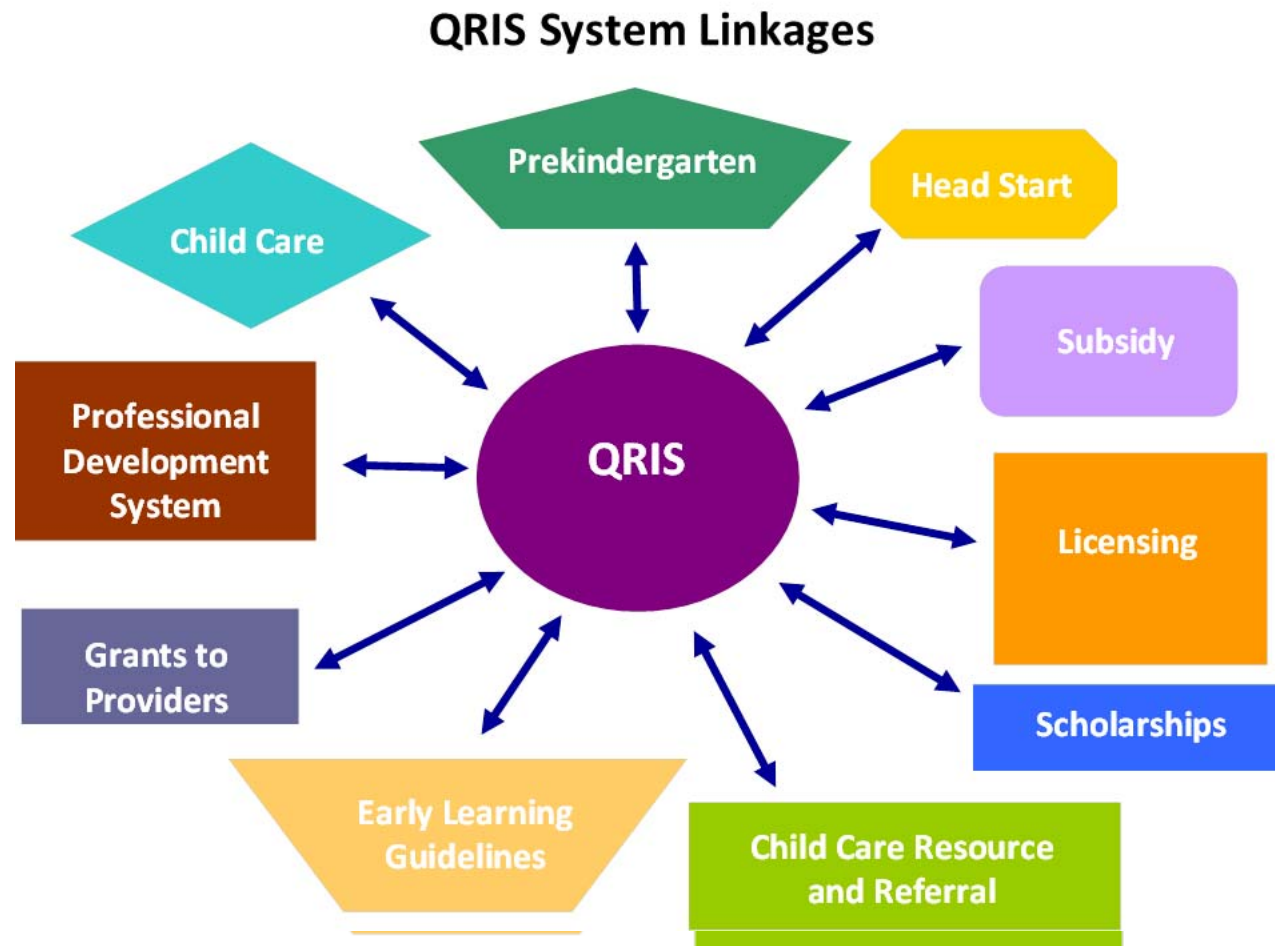
Why Develop a QRIS?

- ◆ Creates **alignment**:
    - ▪ between licensing, subsidy, and quality; and
    - ▪ across child care, prekindergarten, and Head Start.
- ◆ Links **supports and initiatives** to a specific quality framework.
- ◆ Provides an **accountability measure** for funding and quality initiatives.

Quality Elements Integration

Quality Assurance
Monitoring
Prog. Assessment
Child Assessment
Evaluation

Engagement
Child Care Search
Outreach Campaign
Family Education
Quality Website

Program Standards

Incentives
Tiered Rates
Quality Grants
Loans
Scholarships
Wage Supp.

Supports
Training
Consultation
Special Needs
Acc. Facilitation
Specialists

Levels
Federal
State
Program
Practitioner
Child

Types
PD Systems
Licensing
ELS
QRIS
Head Start
Pre-K

Highly functioning integration channels include…

• Communication
• Alignment
• Data Systems
• Streamlined Funding

Source: National Child Care Information Center. (2010). A Profile of Current State Efforts to Improve Quality. Washington, DC: Office of Child Care.

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Why Develop a QRIS?

◆ The overall goal is to increase the quality of programs through **system-wide improvements**.

◆ A QRIS has the opportunity to do the following:

- Increase quality of care for **children**;

- Increase **parents'** understanding of and demand for higher-quality care; and

- Increase professional development for **child care providers**.

QRIS Growth Over the Past 19 Years
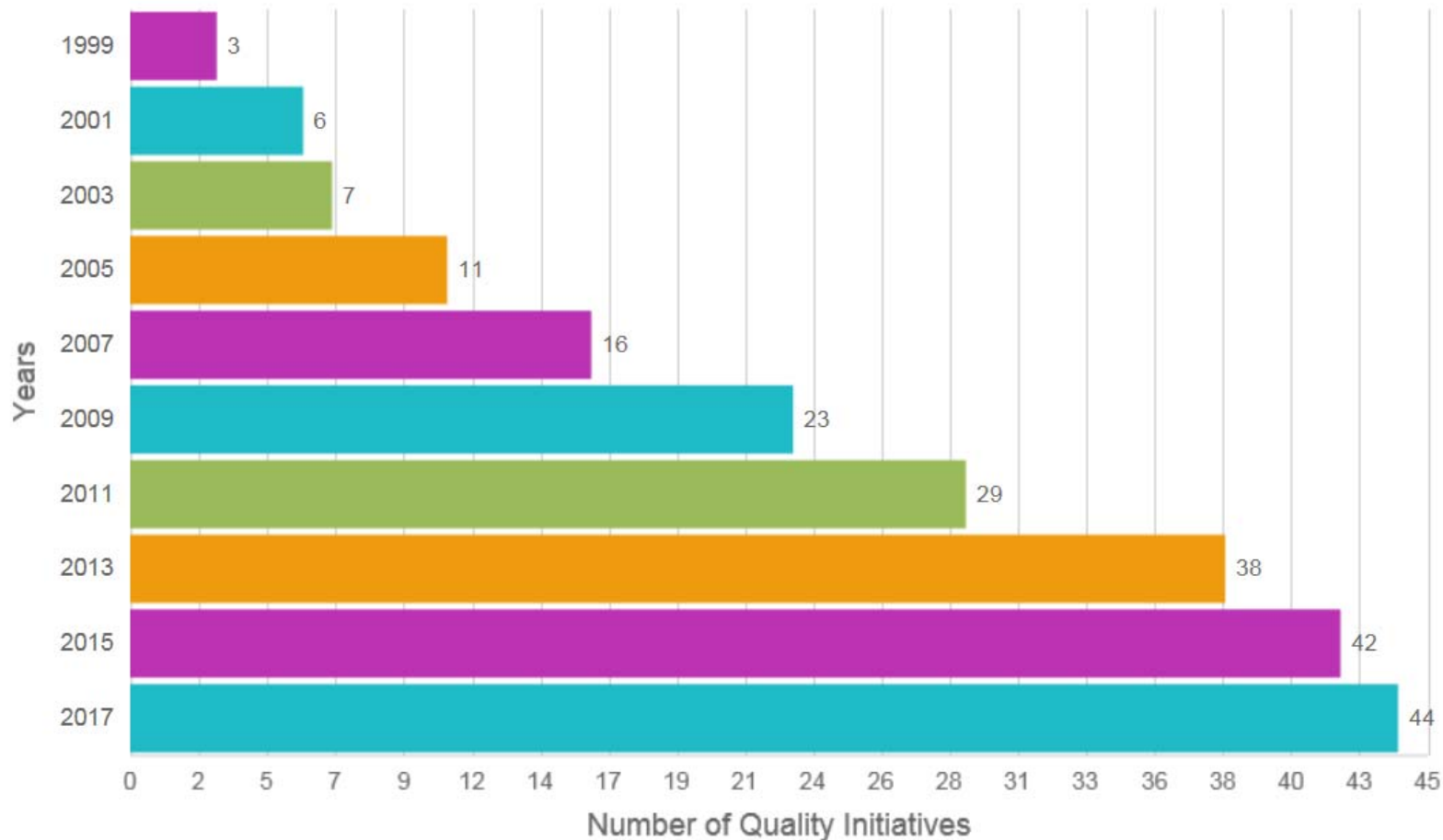
Source: The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). QRIS compendium: Top ten questions about QRIS: What is the pace of QRIS growth over the past 18 years? Retrieved June 3, 2018, from http://qriscompendium.org/top-ten/question-1
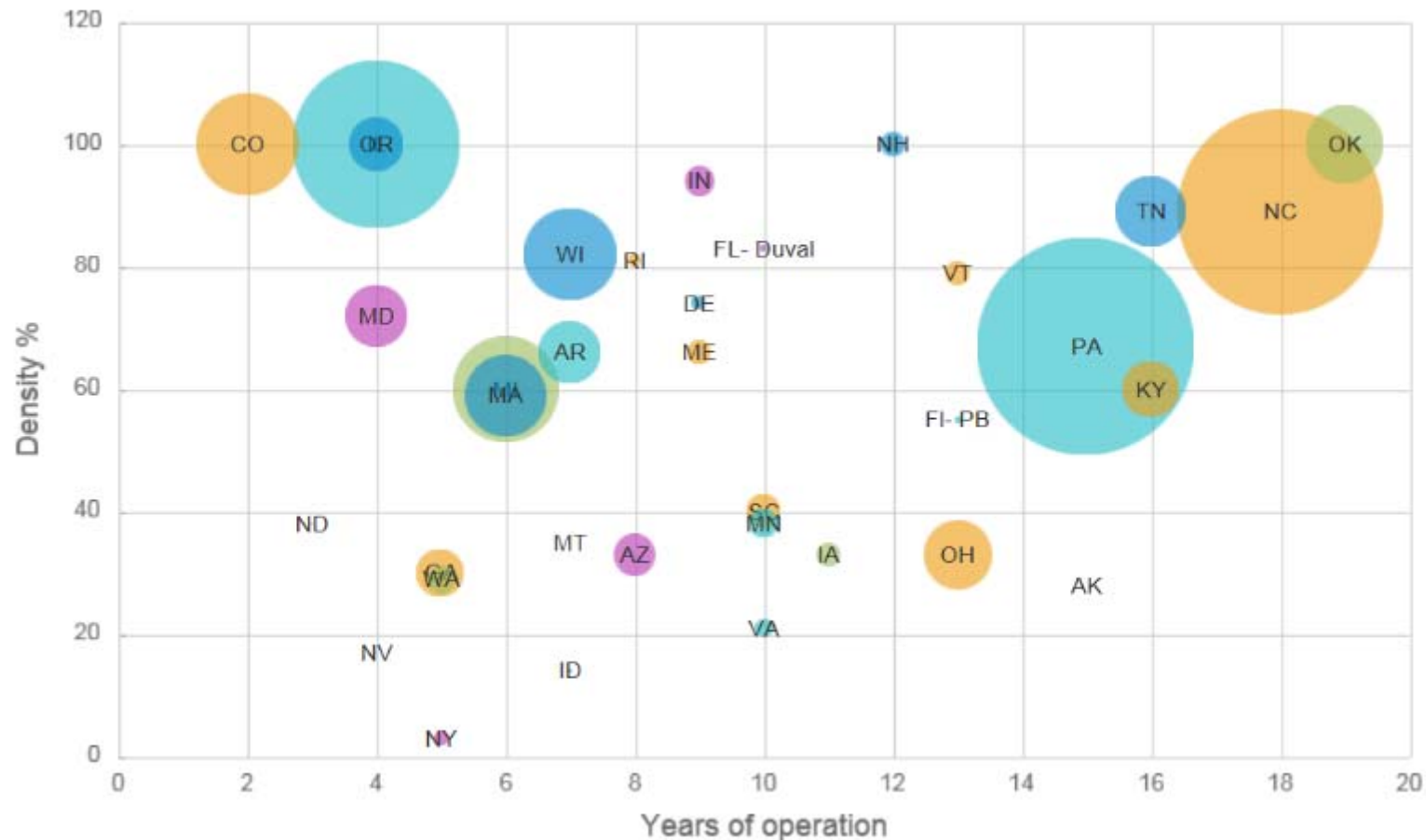
Participation Density

Source: The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). QRIS compendium: Top ten questions about QRIS: What is the density and amount of center-based ECE program participation by years of QRIS operation? Retrieved June 3, 2018, from http://qriscompendium.org/top-ten/question-6

Mission and Goals of QRIS

WHAT ARE THE MISSION AND GOALS OF QRIS?   + Show
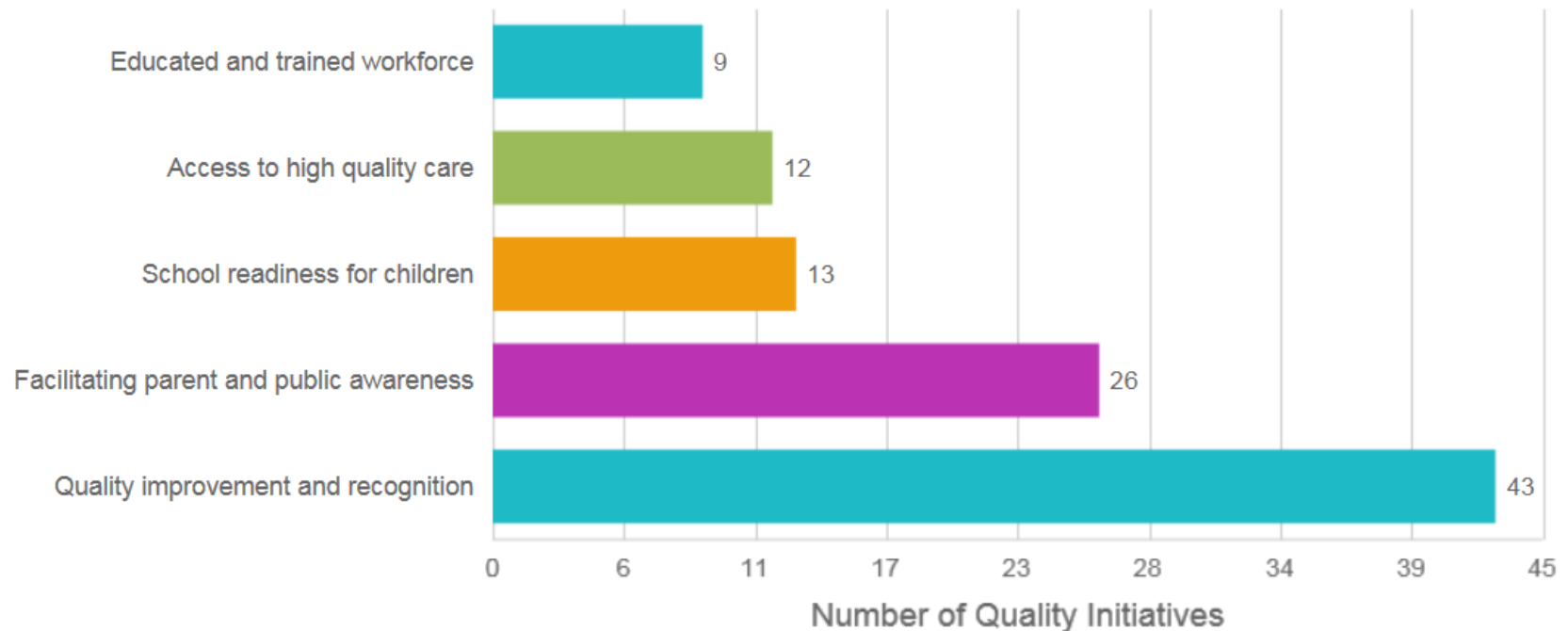
Source: The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). QRIS compendium: Top ten questions about QRIS: What are the mission and goals of QRIS? Retrieved June 3, 2018, from http://qriscompendium.org/top-ten/question-8

Foundation of Licensing

HOW DOES LICENSING DIFFER BY CENTERS AND HOMES?

Licensing data for Centers and Homes

Licensing indicators	Centers	Homes
Licensing required for enrollment	85%	88%
Process for license-exempt programs	41%	20%
Licensing equivalent to the first QRIS level	56%	44%

Source: The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). QRIS compendium: Top ten questions about QRIS: How does licensing differ by centers and homes? Retrieved June 3, 2018, from http://qriscompendium.org/top-ten/question-5

QRIS Compendium

http://qriscompendium.org

QRIS Resource Guide

https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/
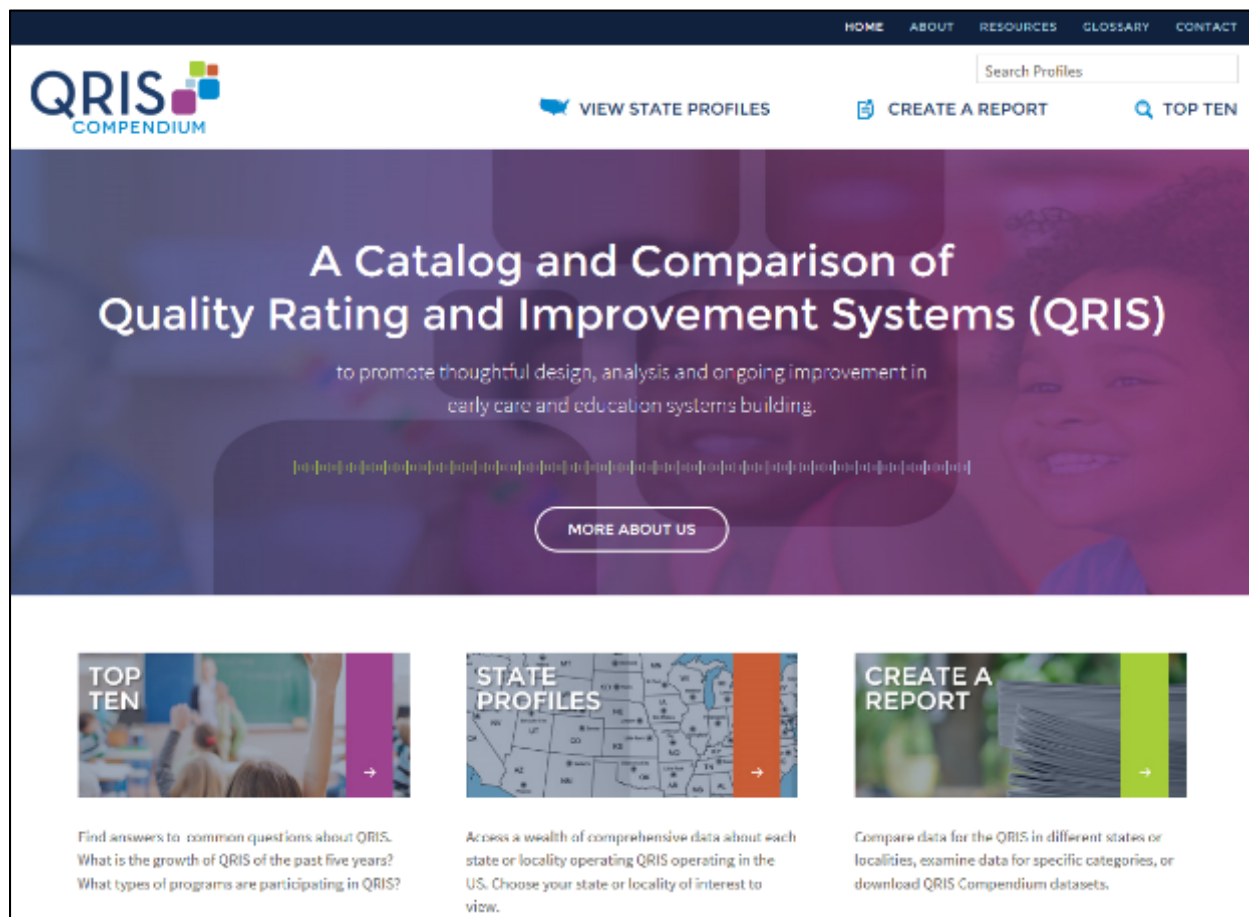
QRIS Structure and Participation

- The QRIS structure determines the participation pathway.
  - The QRIS standards are what is measured or assessed.
- QRIS participation refers to who is eligible.
- Determined by the following:
  - Pilots and field tests;
  - Stakeholder feedback;
  - Legislative priorities;
  - Research; and
  - System capacity and infrastructure.

Approaches to QRIS Structure

◆ **Building block approach:** All standards in each level must be met for programs to move to the next level

◆ **Point system:** Every standard is assigned a number of points, and a combined score is used to determine the quality rating

◆ **Hybrid/combination approach:** Combination of the two approaches above, often with building blocks for lower levels and points for higher levels
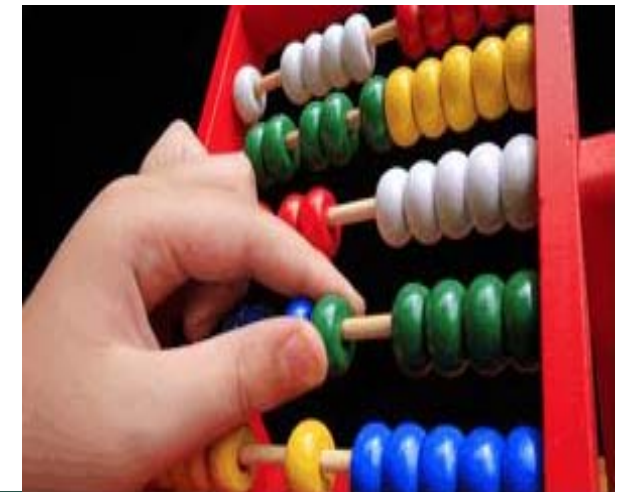
Advantages and Disadvantages

Building Block

- Easy to see what standards a program has met

- Consistent standards for all

- May have fewer indicators

- If indicators at lower levels are difficult to reach, this can halt program movement up the levels

Point System

- Not as transparent; rating level alone doesn't reveal which indicators are met

- Programs may attain points with standards not as critical to program quality

- More flexibility for programs

- Often there are many indicators to verify

Combination/Hybrid
Combines advantages and disadvantages of both

State Approaches

◆ **Building block** = 19 systems

◆ **Point system** = 7 systems

◆ **Combination/hybrid approach** = 18 systems

Source: The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). A catalog and comparison of quality rating and improvement systems. Retrieved June 7, 2018, from http://qriscompendium.org/

Block Structure

All standards in each level must be met for programs to move to the next level.

- Arkansas
- Alaska
- Florida – Miami Dade
- Florida – Palm Beach
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Montana
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Rhode Island
- Virginia

Example of a Block Structure: Maine

Source: Maine Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Quality for ME: Standards for center based child care programs*. Retrieved April 5, 2017, from http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/quality_cbc.pdf

Point Structure

Every standard is assigned a number of points, and a combined score is used to determine the quality rating.

- ◆ Georgia
- ◆ Louisiana
- ◆ Michigan
- ◆ New York
- ◆ North Carolina
- ◆ Vermont
- ◆ DC

Example of a Point Structure: New York

QUALITYstarsNY Standards Guide & Resources

Center-Based Standards

| Learning Environment | Family Engagement | Qualifications and Experience | Management and Leadership |

Classroom Environment

Code	Indicator	Points	Documentation
CE-1	Program administrative staff attends training on the Environment Rating Scales (ERS).	2	☐ Evidence in Aspire that at least 1 administrator has attended the relevant training within the previous 15 months, verified with Training Certificate
CE-2	Program completes an ERS self-assessment using the appropriate scale(s) and writes an improvement plan to address subscale scores below 3.25.	8	☐ Completed ERS self-assessment report stating overall score and subscale scores. If applicable, include improvement plan
CE-3	Program has an independent ERS assessment and achieves an overall score of 4.25 - 4.99. Written improvement plan for subscale scores below 3.50.	30	☐ Completed ERS report(s) is automatically sent to QUALITYstarsNY
CE-4	Program has an independent ERS assessment using the appropriate scale(s) and achieves an overall score of 5.00 - 5.49. Written improvement plan for subscale scores below 4.50.	40	☐ Completed ERS report(s) is automatically sent to QUALITYstarsNY
CE-5	Program has an independent ERS assessment using the appropriate scale(s) and achieves an overall score of 5.50 or higher. Written improvement plan for subscale scores below 4.50.	50	☐ Completed ERS report(s) is automatically sent to QUALITYstarsNY

Source: New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, QUALITYstarsNY Coordinating Agency. (n.d.). *Guide to the center-based standards.* Retrieved April 5, 2017, from http://qualitystarsny.org/standardsguide/std_list.php?pop=722

Hybrid/Combination Structure

Combination of the two approaches, often with building blocks for lower levels and points for higher levels. Some States have mandatory standards and standards with point values.

- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Delaware
- Florida – Duval
- Iowa
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Washington
- Wisconsin

Example of a Hybrid Structure: Washington

WASHINGTON EARLY ACHIEVERS
PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

Washington's Quality Standards: An Overview

"Hybrid" Model

- **Levels 1-2:** All facilities meet the same foundational quality based on licensing/certification and Early Achievers readiness activities
- **Levels 3-5:** Facilities achieve points through evaluation; facilities have flexibility in how they earn points based on program strengths and philosophy

Levels 3-5 achieved through:

- Completion of Level 2 requirements
- On-site evaluation based on Quality Standards which includes:
  - Environment Rating Scales (ERS)
  - Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
  - Review of documentation & records

- Minimum threshold to achieve Level 3:
  - Minimum requirements for ERS and CLASS scores
  - Facilities must earn at least 30 points

91-100 points	5	
70-90 points	4	Points Awarded based on Evaluation
30-69 points	3	
	2	← Professional Growth & Facility Management
	1	← Licensing/Basic Health & Safety

Source: Washington Early Achievers. (n.d.). Washington's quality standards: An overview. Retrieved April 5, 2017, from https://www.del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/imported/publications/elac-qris/docs/EA_quality_standards_overview.pdf

Number of Levels in QRIS

- 6 QRIS have 3 levels
- 11 QRIS have 4 levels
- 25 QRIS have 5 levels
- 2 QRIS have 6 levels

Source: The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). A catalog and comparison of quality rating and improvement systems. Retrieved June 3, 2018, from http://qriscompendium.org/
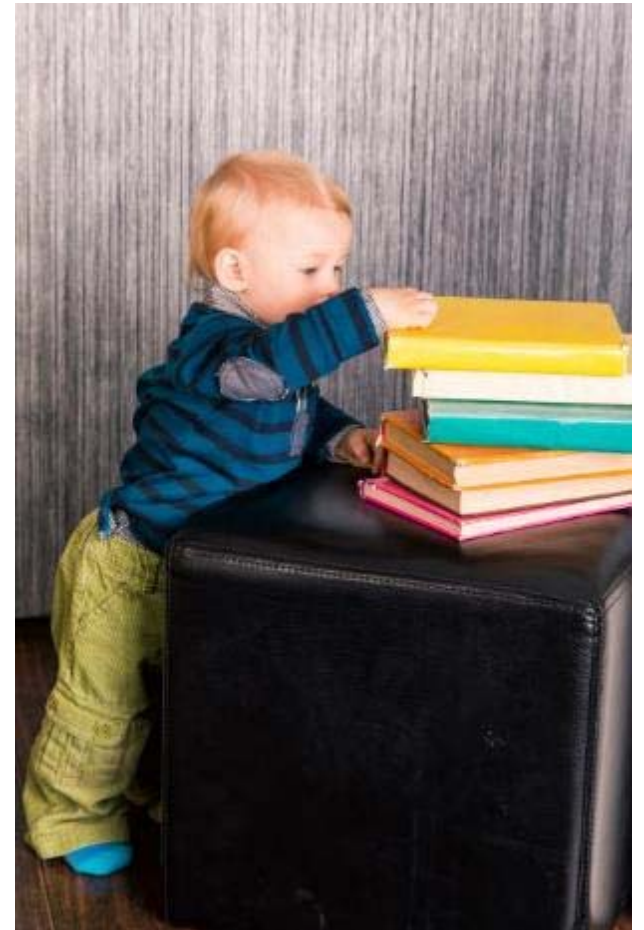
Voluntary vs. Mandatory Participation

◆ Most systems are voluntary.

◆ Mandatory participation is becoming more common:

- By funding stream;
- By law; and
- By regulation.

Element 1: Quality Standards

Standards should be:

- achievable;

- measurable;

- evidence based; and

- understandable.
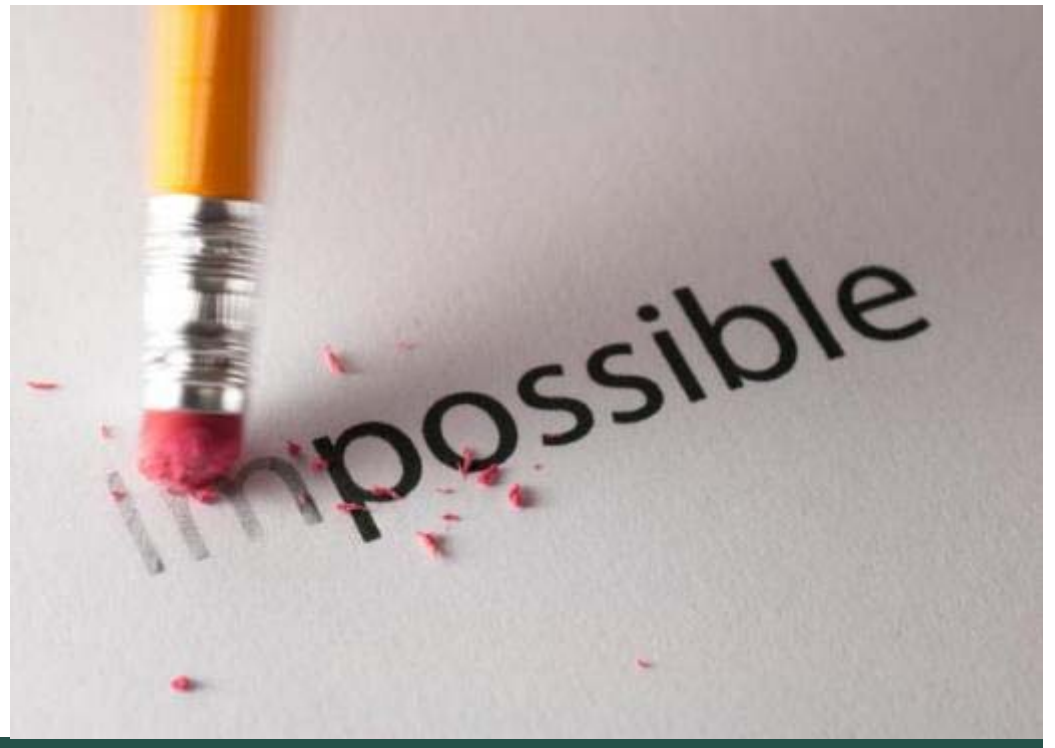
Standards Criteria: Achievable

Expense

Time

Standards Criteria: Feasible to Measure and Manage

- ◆ Monitoring
- ◆ Technical assistance
- ◆ Financial supports
- ◆ Other supports

Standards Criteria: Other Considerations

◆ Be flexible and honor multiple approaches and pedagogies

◆ Measure universal elements of quality

◆ Align with other standards

◆ Align with state investments and priorities

Quality Standards: A National Picture

Indicators	Center-Based ECE	Home-Based ECE
N=	40	39
Staff qualifications and training	95%	95%
Environment	90%	95%
Program administration, management, and leadership	83%	83%
Curriculum	81%	78%
Family partnerships and engagement	79%	78%
Interactions	71%	73%
Health and Safety	69%	66%
Child assessment	67%	68%
Ratio and group size	57%	59%
Community involvement	52%	49%
Provisions for children with special needs	50%	59%
Other	40%	34%
Accreditation	38%	27%
Staff compensation and benefits	21%	--

Source: The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). QRIS compendium: Top ten questions about QRIS: What are the most common types of indicators included in QRIS? Retrieved June 3, 2018, from http://qriscompendium.org/top-ten/question-4

National Observation Tools

- ◆ Environment rating scales

- ◆ Classroom Assessment Scoring System

- ◆ Program Administration Scale/Business Administration Scale

- ◆ Program Quality Assessment

- ◆ Others

Most Commonly Used Observation Tools

WHAT WERE THE MOST COMMONLY USED TOOLS TO OBSERVE PROGRAM QUALITY?
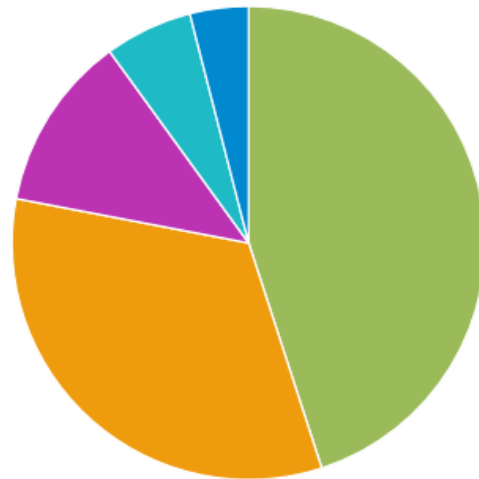
- ERS - 45%
- CLASS - 33%
- Other - 12%
- Self-developed/ home grown tool - 6%
- No observational tool used - 4%
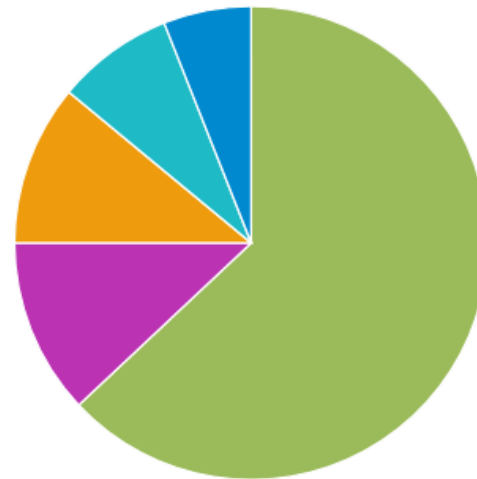
- ERS - 63%
- Other - 12%
- CLASS - 11%
- Self-developed/ home grown tool - 8%
- No observational tool used - 6%

Source: The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). QRIS compendium: Top ten questions about QRIS: What were the most commonly used tools to observe program quality? Retrieved June 3, 2018 from http://qriscompendium.org/top-ten/question-3

Observation Tools: Key Considerations

◆ What does it measure and how well?

◆ Does it address cultural considerations?

◆ Does it align or enhance QRIS standards?

◆ Can the tool be used for self-assessment?

◆ What kind of training will participants need? Coaches? Technical assistance staff?

◆ What is the cost?

◆ What data are needed?

Trends in Quality Standards

- More frequent revisions

- Cross-walking standards

- Research basis for selected standards; data-driven changes to standards

- Fewer QRIS standards: "The few and the powerful."

- Raising the bar on expectations (States melding lower levels into licensing and raising top levels)

- Hybrid or combination approaches

Operationalizing Quality Standards

◆ Providers need time to meet requirements

◆ QRIS partners and stakeholders need in-depth understanding of the standards

◆ It is important to establish and maintain consistent interpretation of the standards

◆ Standards will change and evolve—This is OK!

◆ Communication is key

Financing and Financial Supports

Let's talk about financing.

It costs a lot to implement a QRIS. But what exactly are we paying for?

Accountability and monitoring

Provider support

Data collection and evaluation

Public awareness

What kind of funding can support the system?

Provider support

What motivates you to understand the cost to provide child care?

And what do we know about the costs to run a child care program?

What can child care providers do to improve the financial health of their programs?

What can policymakers do to improve the financial health of child care programs?
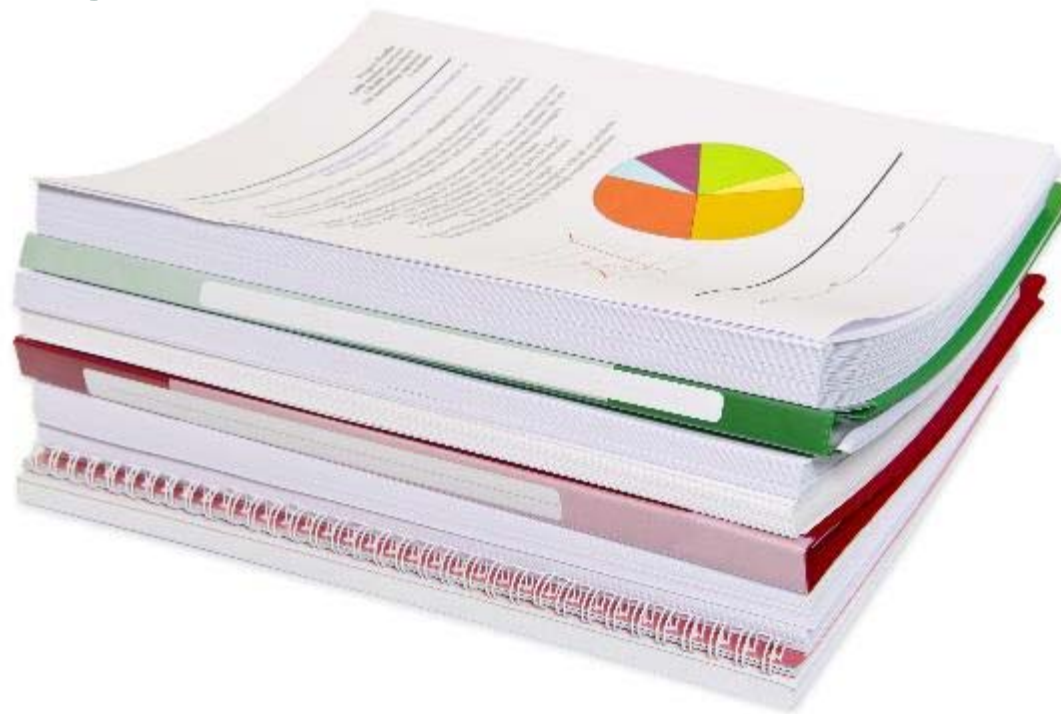
What are your next steps?

Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Quality Assurance & Monitoring

Quality Assurance and Monitoring

- ◆ Objectively assessing program quality and assigning quality levels

- ◆ Using data to track program progress and children's participation by quality level

- ◆ Conducting classroom assessments

- ◆ Evaluating supports for effectiveness

- ◆ External reviewing and revising of standards and levels

Quality Assurance: Valid and Reliable Standards and Rating

◆ **Valid**: The standard measures what you are trying to measure

◆ **Reliable**: The standard gives the same result on a successive trial

Quality Assurance and Monitoring: Data Collectors and Raters

◆ Initially assessing program quality and assigning quality levels

◆ Conducting classroom assessments and program-level assessments

◆ Providing training and technical assistance

◆ Clarifying and communicating about how to apply standards

◆ Others

Efficiency in Monitoring

- Determining how many criteria or standards are needed

    - How are standards documented

- Determining how many onsite assessment tools will be used

    - At all levels or only higher levels

    - In all classrooms or some classrooms

    - In all settings or some settings

- Determining the length of rating

- Accepting status of programs from other systems or that have achieved accreditation

Efficiency in Monitoring

◆ For each QRIS standard or indicator, what is the source(s) of evidence?

- ▪ Self-report

- ▪ Self-assessment

- ▪ Imported data from another system

- ▪ Document submission (online or hard copy portfolio)

- ▪ Observation

Trends in Quality Assurance and Monitoring

- ◆ Linkages with licensing

- ◆ Differential monitoring

- ◆ Coordinated monitoring

- ◆ Moving from 'rating' to 'recognition'

- ◆ Readiness tools or assistance

- ◆ Increased reliance on data systems

- ◆ Careful consideration of efficiencies

  - ▪ Staffing, number of criteria and assessments, reporting, automation

For more information see QRIS Resource Guide: Chapter 5
https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?do=section&sid=4

Key Consideration

◆ Even a QRIS that appears simple can become complex and expensive to administer unless steps are taken to streamline documentation policies and onsite observation expectations for QRIS standards

Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous Quality Improvement

"One major purpose of a QRIS [quality rating and improvement system] is to recognize quality **and** promote a culture of continuous improvement among providers. … The rating is not a destination; it is a set of benchmarks along a pathway of ongoing improvement."

Anne Mitchell

Definition: CQI Is …

◆ **Continuous:** Part of the job; no end point

◆ Owned by the team in a program

◆ Proactive, not reactive

◆ A **reflective, cyclical,** and **data-informed** process

Basically

◆ The process of

- identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and weaknesses (via multiple sources of evidence);

- establishing a plan with benchmarks, timelines, assigned tasks, and responsibilities to improve;

- testing and implementing solutions; and

- evaluating the results and revising the plan

Why CQI

◆ It helps create compliance and a culture of improvement

◆ Not quality for a day

◆ It helps create a sustainable approach that raises the bar for early learning quality

Based on a shared vision of quality:
- Identify general goals and select team
- Analyze current condition using data
- Propose experiment; make plan
- Decide on measures of success

- Build staff capacity and carry out the plan
- Collect documentation and data

Plan | Do
Act | Study

- Adopt, modify, or abandon these practices
- Determine what more needs to be done and learned
- Set up next round

- Share and analyze impact, track results
- Consider adjustments
- Celebrate learning & successes

CQI in Existing QRIS

- Specific standards/criteria
- Part of technical assistance (TA) and program support
- Part of annual reporting/monitoring

Continuous Quality Improvement

◆ **CQI applies to three levels and different strategies are used at each level.**

- **Program level** - program staff and leadership

- **Implementing partner level** - professional development and technical assistance practitioners

- **The state system level** - state agencies, statewide organizations, policymakers, private funders, and contracting entities

QRIS: Three 3 Levels of Work

State/Systems Level

Implementing Partner Level

Program Level

CQI Focus
Own Level

CQI Focus
System
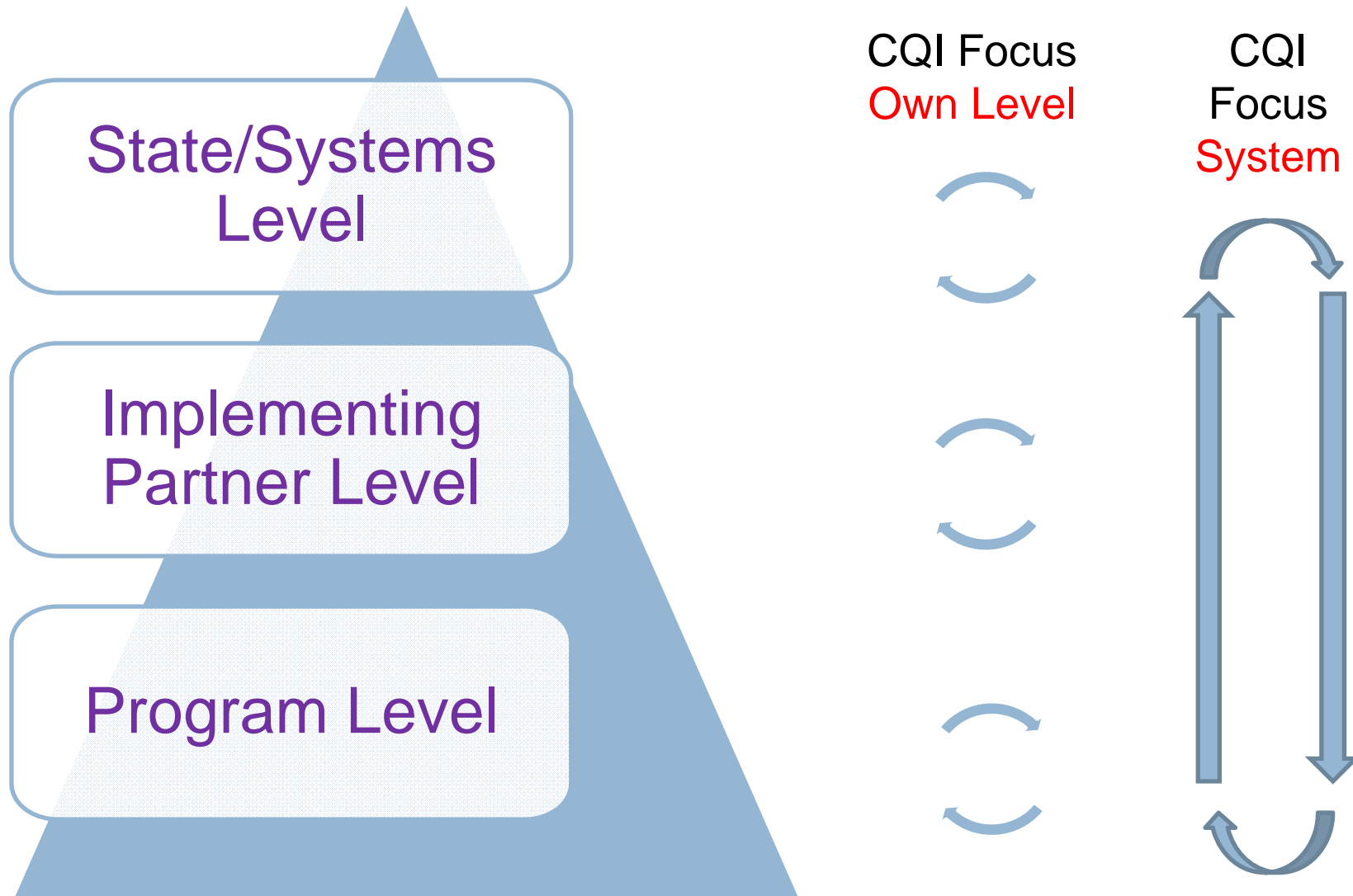
CQI as a Standard in QRIS

- ◆ Program conducts a self-assessment or is assessed
- ◆ Quality improvement plans developed after an assessment
- ◆ Other sources of evidence and data are used to inform the QIP
- ◆ Quality improvement plans are used at all levels to track progress

How to Live CQI

◆ Use the continuous quality improvement model to make small, incremental changes

◆ CQI is most effective when it becomes a natural part of the way everyday work is done

"Change that lasts is slow and gradual." - Kaizen

改善

Kai=Change Zen=Good

Why Is Readiness for Change Important?

"A one-size-fits-all approach that ignores differences in readiness to change may result in a waste of resources, lower program retention, and worse outcomes for educators and children."

Peterson & Cairns 2012 p..2

What Are the Stages of Change?

◆ Stage 1: Precontemplation

◆ Stage 2: Contemplation

◆ Stage 3: Preparation

◆ Stage 4: Action

◆ Stage 5: Maintenance

Peterson & Cairns 2012 p..3

What Strategies Can Be Used at Each Stage of Change?

- ◆ Stage 1: Raise awareness

- ◆ Stage 2: Raise confidence and identify obstacles

- ◆ Stage 3: Set goals and gain commitment

- ◆ Stage 4: Assist with problem solving and resource identification

- ◆ Stage 5: Support integration of changes and team building

Peterson & Cairns 2012 p..3

Five Essential Supports Framework for Continuous Learning and Improvement

Relational Trust and Professional Community

Definitions adapted with permission and collaboration from authors: Bryk, A., Sebring, P., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., and Easton, J. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons From Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

CL(1   Chun, Leatha (ACF), 6/4/2018
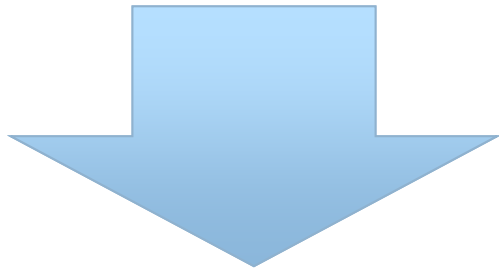
CL(2   This is a excellent slide and am interested in how you align/connect the 5 essential supports framework with the
               components/processes of CQI.
               Chun, Leatha (ACF), 6/4/2018

Changing the Dynamic

- Externally driven and delivered professional development

- Internally driven and embedded continuous professional learning and improvement

- Focus on individual's knowledge and capacity

- Facilitate learning and build organizational capacity for effective teaching through inquiry-based approaches and reflective practice

Indicators of a Culture of Continuous Improvement

◆ Curiosity

◆ Reflection

◆ Tolerance

◆ Feedback

◆ Systems thinking

Designing Professional Development and Technical Assistance that Builds Capacity of Continuous Learning and Improvement
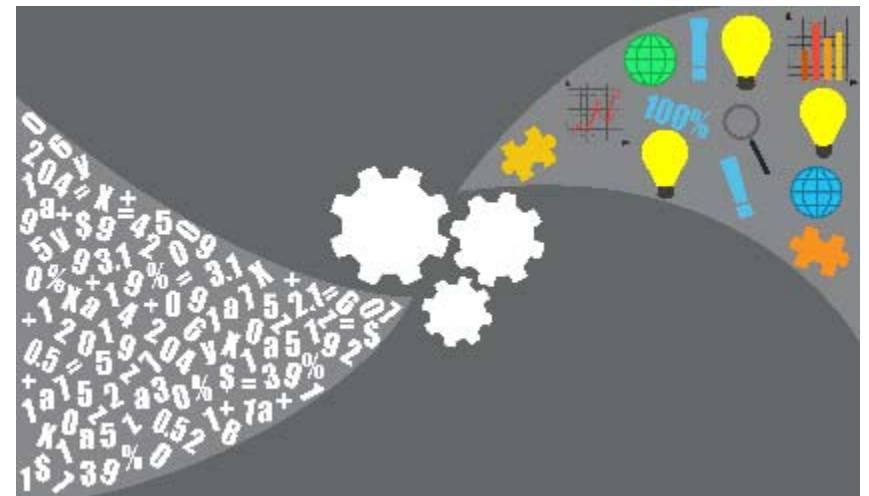
Building a Learning Organization

"The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization."

Senge, P. M. (2006). *p.4*

Measuring CQI

◆ What does the research tell us?

◆ How can we measure the success of a CQI approach?

◆ What data are we collecting?

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