QRIS Compendium
2016 Fact Sheets

NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Quality Assurance

Early Childhood
National Centers

Curriculum and Child Assessment Indicators

QRIS frequently incorporate the use of curricula and child assessment as indicators for rating programs, especially in QRIS focused on improving school readiness and child outcomes. Some QRIS specify particular curricula or child assessments in their indicators or use the terminology "state approved" to indicate a more fluid list. Other QRIS include indicators related to receipt of training on curriculum and child assessment. This fact sheet describes in greater detail the way in which curriculum and child assessment indicators are incorporated into the 41 QRIS.

This fact sheet is one of a series about the state of quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) in the United States. In 2016, there were 41 fully operational QRIS in the United States.[1] Data are from the QRIS Compendium (http://QRIScompendium.org), a catalog of the QRIS operating in the United States as of October 31, 2016.[2]

Curriculum Indicators in QRIS

♦ Thirty-four QRIS (83 percent) incorporate curriculum use into their indicators for centers.

♦ Thirty-one QRIS (76 percent) incorporate curriculum use for family child care homes (FCC).

The most common ways that curriculum is incorporated in QRIS indicators for centers are as follows:

♦ Twenty-eight (68 percent) show alignment between the program's curricula and state early learning;

♦ Eighteen (44 percent) use assessment results to inform curriculum implementation; and

♦ Thirteen (32 percent) require training on curriculum use.

Curriculum standards for FCC look similar. Twenty QRIS (49 percent) show alignment of curriculum with early learning guidelines as the most common standard for FCC.

Some states incorporate curriculum into their QRIS in unique ways. **New Mexico's** QRIS, FOCUS, incorporates curriculum review and feedback into their standardized observation and curriculum planning process which informs programs' continuous quality improvement plans.

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[1] State with a QRIS: AR, AZ, CA, CO, DE, FL (3 localities), GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI. While most QRIS operate at the state level, three represent separate counties in Florida (Duval, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach). The California QRIS, while represented in the Compendium as one system, is implemented at the county level and does not include all counties in the state.

[2] Data compiled in 2014 and 2015 from http://QRIScompendium.org are used to show change in the number of QRIS with specific features. These data are supplemented by an earlier version of the Compendium titled *Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations*, which was released in 2010. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/compendium-of-quality-rating-systems-and-evaluations. Publicly available details about QRIS standards and implementation and interviews with QRIS administrators also inform the fact sheet.

Curricula Accepted

For preschoolers, the most common curricula that are specifically approved in QRIS are Creative Curriculum[3] by 10 QRIS (24 percent) and High Scope[4] by 9 QRIS (22 percent) as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Most Commong Preschool Curricula Approved by QRIS for Centers, 2016
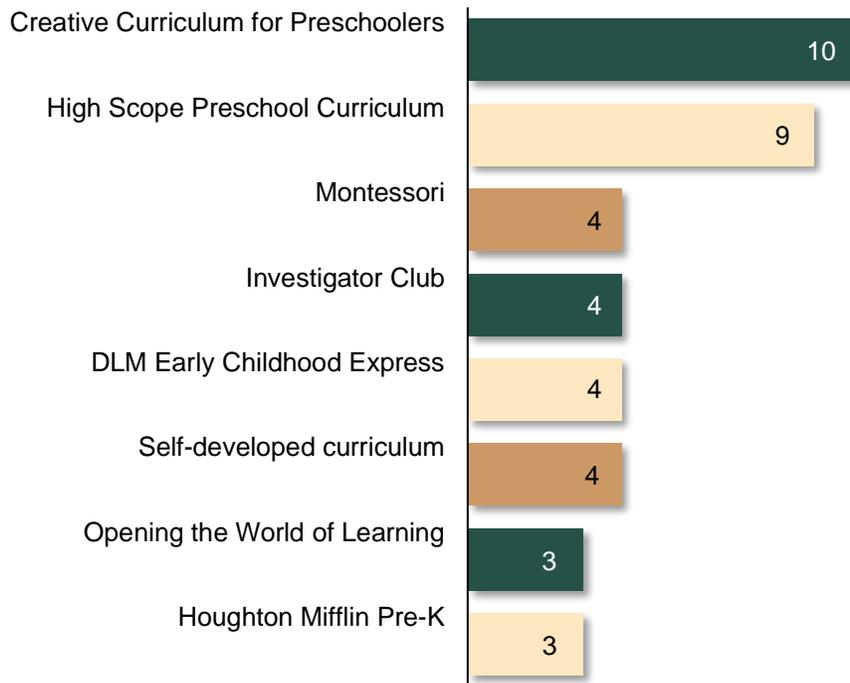
Note: N = 34 QRIS. Some are in multiple categories.

Child Assessment Indicators in QRIS

Most QRIS incorporate indicators related to child assessment for both centers (31 QRIS; 76 percent) and FCC (26 QRIS; 63 percent). QRIS incorporate assessment into the standards for centers and FCC in similar ways.

Indicator Features

For centers, the most common features of assessment indicators are:

♦ Assessments guide curriculum planning in 22 QRIS (54 percent);

♦ Assessments guide individualization of curriculum in 21 QRIS (51 percent); and

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[3] https://teachingstrategies.com/solutions/teach/preschool/
[4] https://highscope.org/preschool

♦ Selection of curricula align with the state's early learning guidelines in 20 QRIS (49 percent).

For FCC, the most common features of child assessment indicators are:

♦ Assessments align with the early learning guidelines in 19 QRIS (46 percent) and

♦ Assessments guide curriculum planning in 17 QRIS (41 percent).

Figure 2: Features of Child Assessment Indicators in QRIS, 2016
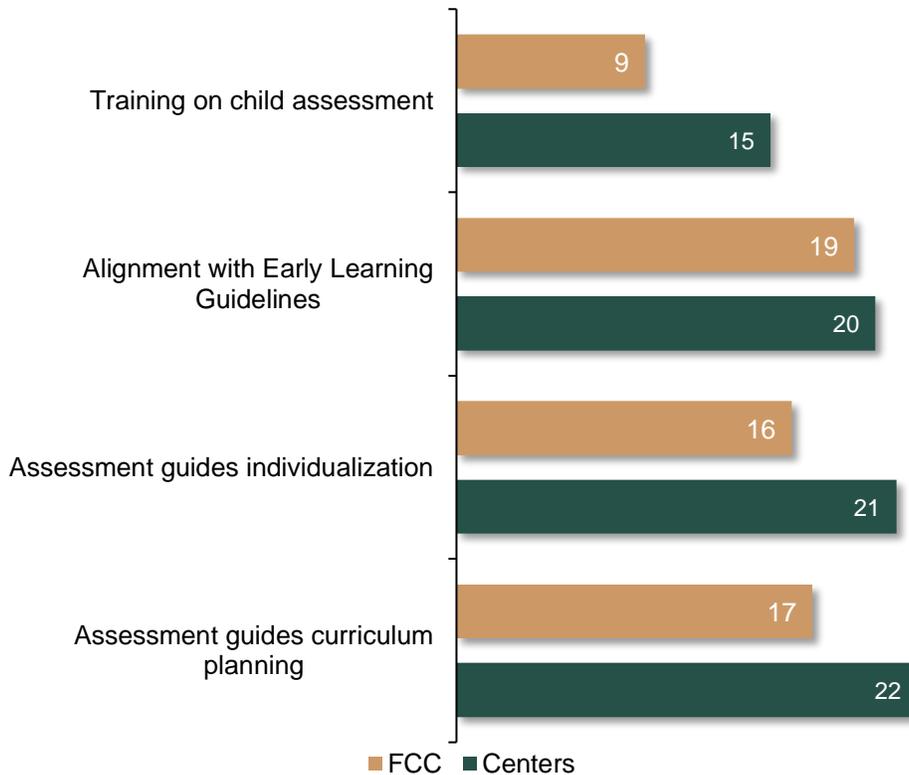
Note: N = 31 QRIS for centers; 26 QRIS for FCC. Some are in multiple categories.

Assessments Used

The most common child assessments specifically mentioned in indicators for centers are Teaching Strategies Gold[5] in 12 QRIS (29 percent) and High Scope[6] assessments for both infants/toddlers and preschoolers in 7 QRIS (17 percent).

These are the two most common assessments for FCC as well, with 10 QRIS (24 percent) naming Teaching Strategies Gold and 5 QRIS (12 percent) naming High Scope as accepted assessments in the quality indicators.

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[5] https://teachingstrategies.com/solutions/assess/gold/
[6] https://highscope.org/assessment

Other assessment tools mentioned as being used in QRIS include the Work Sampling System (WSS)[7], the Brigance Inventory of Early Development[8], and the Ounce Scale[9], each specifically named by less than five QRIS.
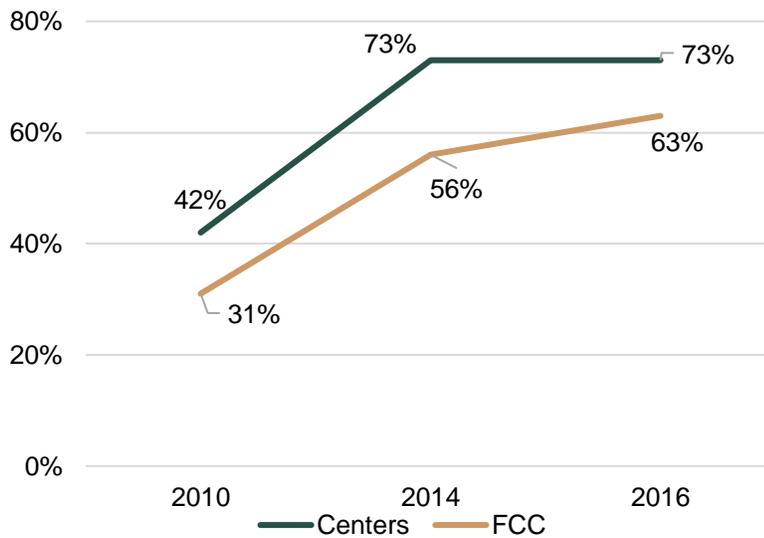
Curriculum and Assessment Over Time

Inclusion of curriculum and assessment indicators in QRIS has grown over time.

Assessment

♦ In 2010, 11 of 26 QRIS (42 percent) included indicators for centers related to assessment; by 2016, 30 (73 percent) of QRIS include assessment indicators for centers.

♦ The growth was even steeper for FCC: in 2010 only 8 QRIS (31 percent) included assessment indicators compared to 26 (63 percent) of QRIS in 2016.

**Figure 3: Percent of QRIS With Child Assessment Indicators**

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[7] https://www.pearsonclinical.com/childhood/landing/wso-for-ny.html
[8] https://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/brigance-early-childhood.aspx
[9] https://www.pearsonclinical.com/childhood/products/100000403/ounce-scale-the.html?Pid=PAaOunce#tab-details

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Curriculum

The growth in the inclusion of indicators related to curriculum shows a similar trajectory.

♦ In 2010, 14 (54 percent) of QRIS included curriculum use in their indicators for centers; by 2016, the number was 33 (80 percent).

♦ FCC indicators related to curriculum were included in 10 (38 percent) QRIS in 2010; by 2016, the proportion grew to 31 (76 percent).

Figure 4: Percent of QRIS With Curriculum Indicators
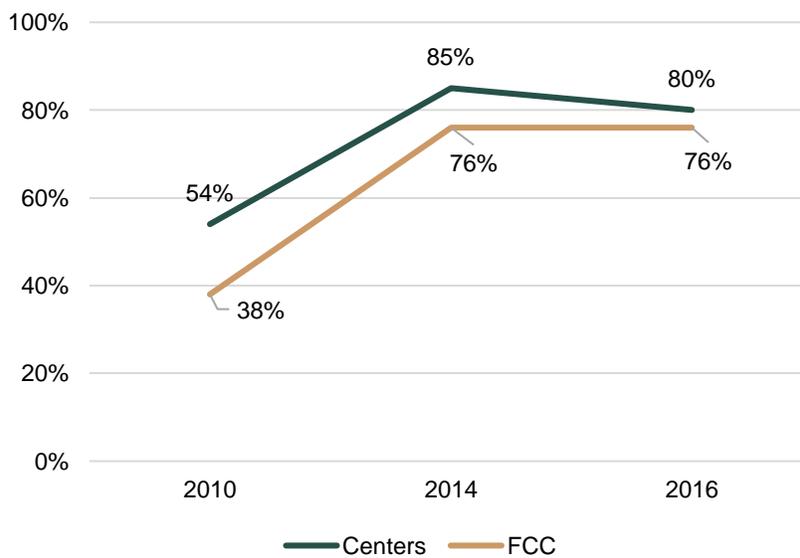
Curricula and Assessment Review Process

QRIS have different ways to determine whether curricula and assessments can be accepted when they are not on an approved list. Although there is not one common approach, a strategy used by 4 QRIS (10 percent) for centers and 6 QRIS (15 percent) for FCC is to complete a crosswalk with the state's early learning guidelines.

QRIS Showcase: Ohio's Step Up To Quality

The Ohio QRIS, Step Up To Quality (SUTQ), is a five-level system that is currently voluntary for all licensed programs except early childhood education grantees (i.e., state-funded preschool programs) and preschool special education programs (i.e., Part B Section 619). They were mandated by law to participate and were phased into SUTQ in waves beginning in October 2013. Also mandated by state law, any program receiving publicly funded child care dollars must participate in SUTQ by 2020. By 2025, all programs must be highly rated at a 3-, 4- or 5-star. SUTQ includes a strong focus on the importance of curriculum by including these indicators at every level. The star rating progressions build on each other and the previous level must be met at the next level, where additional standards are added, including optional standards to be used to obtain extra points.

At the 1-star level, programs research a curriculum and provide an explanation of the curricula they considered. Two-star programs need to obtain their curricula. For 3 stars, programs must demonstrate how teachers are using curriculum in their classrooms. At the 4- and 5-star levels, programs must continue implementing all items required at the 3-star level, and can earn extra points on curriculum standards related to planning purposeful activities for instructional time as well as learning and exploration opportunities.

Programs are not required to choose curricula from an approved list; rather, they are free to choose any research-based curriculum that aligns with the early learning standards. Beginning at the 2-star level, programs must complete an alignment tool to demonstrate how their chosen curricula meet these requirements. One of the main reasons that SUTQ uses this process is to provide flexibility and meet the needs of the different types of programs, including Head Start, centers, FCC, and school-based programs that are participating in the system.

Ohio's network of child care resource and referral agencies is responsible for supporting programs in the curriculum selection and implementation process. Many of these agencies have curricula onsite and can demonstrate different curricula with providers, help providers choose a curriculum, assist them with the alignment tool, and provide training on curriculum planning. Additionally, SUTQ provides an opportunity for programs meeting set criteria to choose from a couple of curricula at no cost. This program was started after discovering that curriculum cost was a barrier for programs to move up to the 2- and 3-star levels. This program became available to all programs in the summer of 2016.

References

Mathematica Policy Research Inc. & Child Trends. (2010). Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from
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The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). A Catalog and Comparison of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) [Data System]. Retrieved from http://qriscompendium.org/

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center) supports State and community leaders and their partners in the planning and implementation of rigorous approaches to quality in all early care and education settings for children from birth to school age. The ECQA Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

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