QRIS Compendium
2016 Fact Sheets

NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Quality Assurance

Early Childhood
National Centers

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance (TA) in QRIS supports the reflective processes that professionals need to translate the theories and information learned through education and training into best practices (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2011). This fact sheet provides a descriptive analysis of data from QRIScompendium.org about how TA is implemented across QRIS operating in the United States. It includes information about the types and focus areas of TA, the job titles used for TA providers, the number of TA providers delivering services for QRIS, and trainings or certifications needed for TA providers. This fact sheet also includes information on the delivery of TA: how TA is targeted to early care and education (ECE) programs; whether standardized processes are used; and details on the dosage of onsite support.

> 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]

Types of TA

All 41 QRIS are providing some type of TA to their participating programs, although the extent and type of TA varies between systems. TA "type" includes the method or model for how TA is delivered to ECE programs. TA types could include:

♦ Mentoring—a relationship-based process between colleagues;

♦ Coaching—a relationship-based process led by an expert;

♦ Consultation—a collaborative, problem-solving process with an external consultant;

♦ Professional development (PD) advising—a one-on-one process in which an advisor offers PD guidance; and

♦ Peer-to-peer—development of relationship-based learning and support communities among colleagues.

Most QRIS report providing more than one type of TA.

Figure 1 shows the number of QRIS providing the common types of TA. Coaching is the most common type of TA. The popularity of coaching has increased over time: in 2015, 35 QRIS included coaching as a type of TA.

---

[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.

Figure 1: Number of QRIS Providing Certain Types of TA, 2016
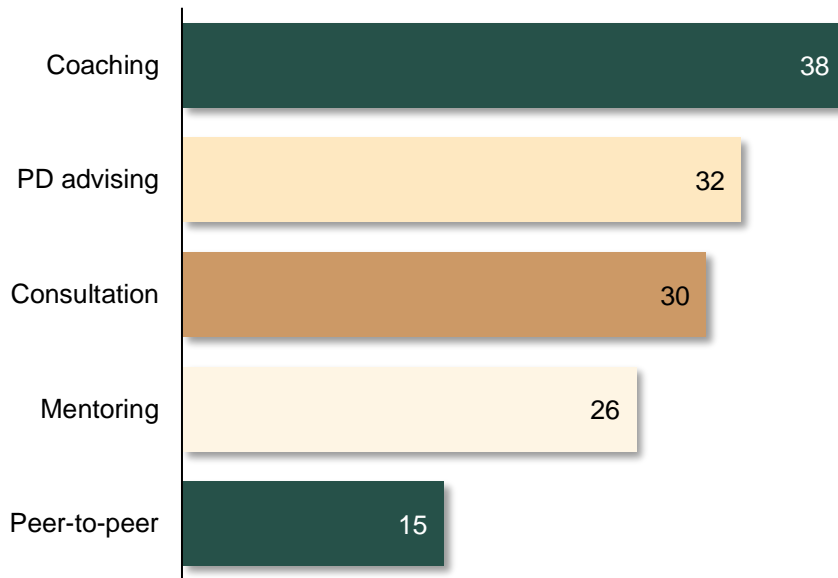
Note: N = 41 QRIS

Programs That Receive TA

Most QRIS (31, 76 percent) offer at least some TA **to all programs participating in the QRIS**, even if they provide additional TA to some programs. Many QRIS (17) use more than one strategy to determine which programs receive TA.

In some states and territories, onsite TA is provided to specific programs, for example those in communities where there is a high percentage of at-risk children or programs rated at lower QRIS levels.

Figure 2 shows the most common groups that are targeted for TA are

♦ Providers serving children from low-income families (15 QRIS; 37 percent);

♦ Programs at lower levels of quality (10 QRIS; 24 percent); and

♦ Those located in communities with high needs (10 QRIS; 24 percent).

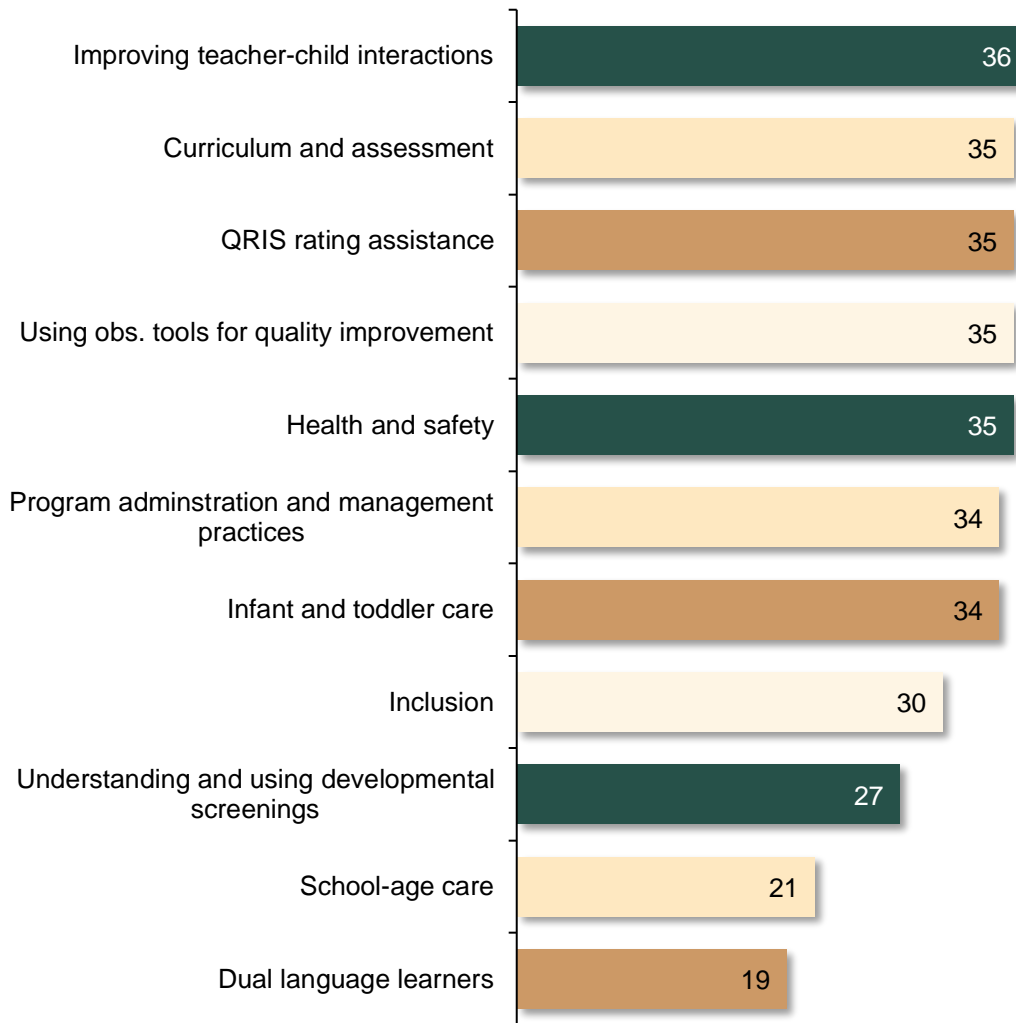**Figure 2: Number of QRIS that Target Specific Program for TA, 2016**
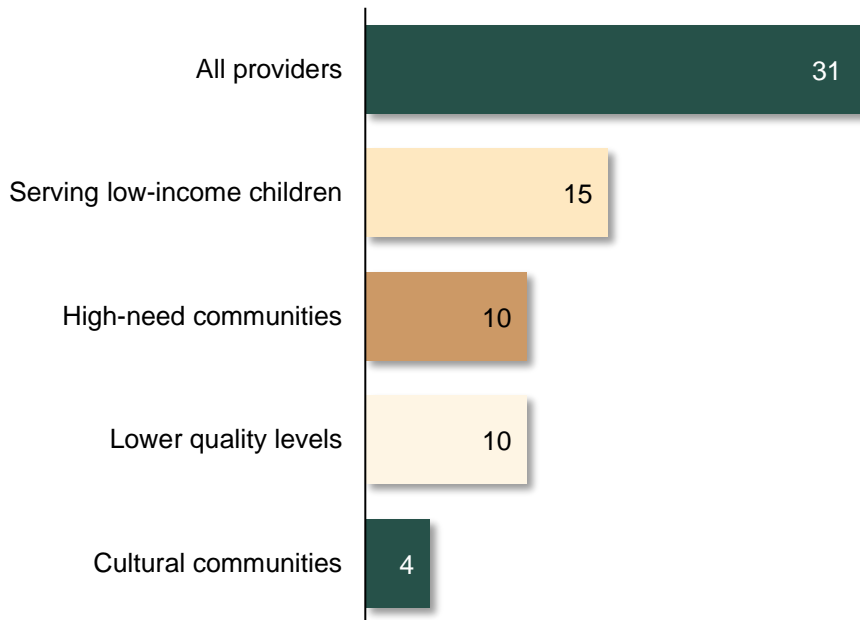
Note: N = 41 QRIS

Technical Assistance Focus

TA "focus areas" are the content provided to ECE programs across all TA types.

♦ Most QRIS (39; 95 percent) provide TA on multiple focus areas.

♦ Figure 3 shows that improving teacher-child interactions was the most common focus of TA (90 percent, up from 84 percent in 2015).

♦ Other common focus areas include: curriculum and assessment, rating assistance, observational tools, health and safety, program administration and management, and care for infants and toddlers.

Figure 3: Number of QRIS Focusing on Certain Types of TA, 2016

Category	Value
Improving teacher-child interactions	36
Curriculum and assessment	35
QRIS rating assistance	35
Using obs. tools for quality improvement	35
Health and safety	35
Program adminstration and management practices	34
Infant and toddler care	34
Inclusion	30
Understanding and using developmental screenings	27
School-age care	21
Dual language learners	19

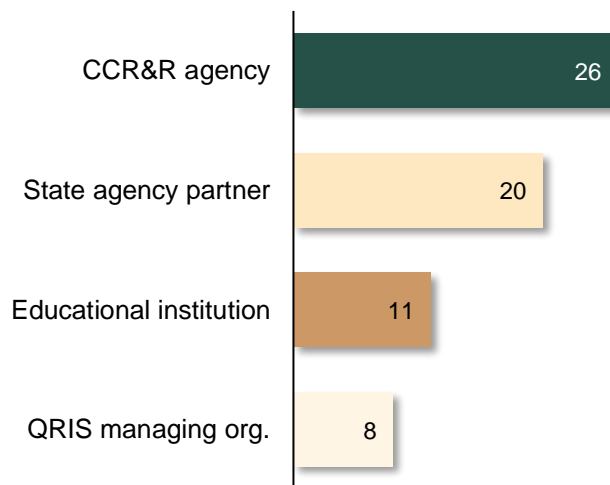Note: N = 41 QRIS. Some are in multiple categories.

TA Process

Thirty QRIS (73 percent) require TA providers to follow a standardized process or model when they are providing TA. QRIS TA models often have guidelines for the amount of TA time that programs will receive and the length of time the TA will last.

♦ In 34 QRIS (83 percent), the length of time varies based on program type or level of quality.

♦ Six (14 percent) QRIS have models in which TA is provided for more than 6 months, while one QRIS has TA that always lasts between 1 and 6 months.

♦ The remaining six QRIS use a variety of other models for determining how long TA lasts.

TA Providers

Child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies are the most common organizations providing TA (63 percent), as shown in Figure 4. State agency partners also provide TA in 49 percent of QRIS.

Figure 4: Number of Organizations Providing TA, 2016

Note: N = 41 QRIS. Some are in multiple categories.

Across QRIS, the individuals providing TA have different titles. Most are referred to as "consultants" or "coaches" and some are called "specialists" or "advisors." The number of TA providers across QRIS ranges from 3 to 190 with a median of 40.

Twenty-nine (71 percent) QRIS require certain preparation, like training or certification, for TA providers before they can begin working with programs. The other 12 QRIS (29 percent) do not. Preparation requirements for TA providers include specific education degrees (14 QRIS; 34 percent) and completion of specific training (12; 29 percent).

NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Quality Assurance

Early Childhood
National Centers

QRIS Showcase: Oregon's Spark

Spark, Oregon's QRIS, is a block system that has been operational since 2013. Oregon is currently revising Spark in order to support and incentivize continuous quality improvements for care and education programs and their workforce, and partner with families and communities to highlight the importance of and access to early learning experiences. Investments and resources are prioritized to increase access to quality care for children, families, and communities furthest from opportunity. This focus is in response to data, community engagement, best practices, and the racial equity lens that the Oregon Early Learning Division in the Department of Education has adopted to guide its work with children and families and the programs that serve them.

This equity focus has impacted the way in which Spark prioritizes which programs to target for intensive technical assistance (TA). Oregon implements this by offering a TA model which offers support for general needs of all programs as well as intensive technical assistance to programs serving children furthest from opportunity.

The universal TA level administers strategies to any participating program and includes activities such as trainings and web-based information. At the targeted level, support is provided to programs with similar needs through group training and work sessions. Programs receiving intensive TA are provided with individual coaching and onsite visits that focus on specific quality improvement activities to address areas of growth identified during the self-assessment.

Identifying which programs are serving populations furthest from opportunity is a process that combines both data-driven and relationship-based approaches. Regional early learning hubs collect data and report on metrics that can be used to identify "hotspots" where there are clusters of programs and communities serving prioritized populations. Quality improvement specialists around the state also contribute information about the areas and programs within their communities that serve communities of color, diverse language communities, rural communities, and families experiencing poverty.

Once programs are identified for either the targeted or intensive TA tracks, it typically takes 9 months to complete quality improvement journey from initial application to rating. However, the total length of the technical assistance provided varies based on the individual needs of programs. For instance, in more rural areas of the state, there may be limited access to educational opportunities to meet staff qualification requirements. TA in those areas may focus on helping providers identify and access educational opportunities to meet standards related to staff qualifications. Other intensive TA might entail observing teachers' interactions with children and developing a plan to address areas that are in need of improvement.

References

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2011). *Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary*. Retrieved from http://www.naeyc.org/GlossaryTraining_TA.pdf

The Build Initiative & Child Trends. (2016). *A Catalog and Comparison of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems* (QRIS) [Data System]. Retrieved from http://qriscompendium.org/

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 https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/compendium-of-quality-rating-systems-and-evaluations

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.

**National Center on
Early Childhood Quality Assurance**

9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

Phone: 877-296-2250
Email: QualityAssuranceCenter@ecetta.info

Subscribe to Updates
http://www.occ-cmc.org/occannouncements_sign-up/

ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES