

The Director's Link

Published by the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University

Fall 2007

Illinois Launches New Quality Rating System for Early Care and Education

Linda Butkovich and Teri Talan

With the launch of the Quality Counts: Quality Rating System in July 2007, Illinois joined the growing number of states across the country implementing quality rating systems. A Quality Rating System (QRS) is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Much like the rating systems used for restaurants and hotels, QRS award stars (or some other symbol) to recognize higher quality programs that meet defined program standards.

Currently there are 15 states (Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Vermont) that have statewide Quality Rating Systems. Many more states are in the design or pilot stage of QRS development. Although the states with QRS may vary on the number of quality levels recognized or the specific quality criteria required, all Quality Rating Systems have criteria that address staff qualifications, training, and professional development.

QRS Common Elements

All Quality Rating Systems are composed of five common elements.

Program Standards

Standards for Quality Rating Systems are built on the foundation of child care licensing regulations. While licensing regulations provide the “floor” of minimum quality requirements, QRS provides the “ceiling” of higher quality standards, such as national accreditation or achieving minimum scores on reliable and valid measures of program quality. What makes QRS particularly useful as a quality improvement strategy is that it recognizes and rewards the multiple stair steps of quality needed to ascend from the floor to the ceiling.

Accountability Measures

Accountability measures and monitoring processes are used to determine how well programs meet QRS standards and to assign quality ratings.

Program and Practitioner Support

Training and technical assistance is provided to encourage program participation in QRS and to assist programs to attain higher levels of quality.

Financial Incentives

Programs that meet higher standards than licensing regulations and achieve a quality rating are eligible for financial incentives such as a tiered subsidy reimbursement (if they serve children from families that receive Child Care and Development Fund subsidies) or quality improvement grants.

Continued on page 2

Continued from front page

Parent and Consumer Education

Most Quality Rating Systems award easily recognizable symbols, such as stars, to programs that indicate the level of program quality to parents and other consumers. One of the goals of the QRS is to better educate parents about quality components in early care and education and to assist them in making informed decisions when choosing a child care program.

Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System

The Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System was designed to support the state's early care and education programs in providing higher quality care for children and their families. The voluntary system is funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and is available to licensed programs as well as license-exempt family child care providers serving children eligible for the IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

The Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System was designed to support the state's early care and education programs in providing higher quality care for children and their families.

The system for licensed homes and centers consists of four progressive star levels, providing a continuum that sets clear benchmarks of quality. Specific quality criteria must be met to achieve each star level. Once these criteria have been met, the program will receive a quality add-on rate to the CCAP standard reimbursement rate of 5%, 10%, 15%, or 20%. The quality criteria relate to four areas of program standards: regulatory compliance, learning environment, program administration, and qualifications and training (see chart for licensed centers on page 3).

Implementing the System

IDHS is partnering with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) and the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership to implement this voluntary system. INCCRRA is responsible for the overall administration of the quality rating system. The McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership is responsible for providing on-site assessments of the learning environment of early childhood centers and family child care homes. The Center is also responsible for providing assessments of leadership and management practices in centers and business practices in family child care homes.

Getting Involved

The first step for those interested in learning more about Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System is to attend a QRS orientation. QRS orientations are being offered by local child care resource and referral agencies. Proof of attendance at an "Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS)" training is also required for all licensed family child care and center providers applying for QRS.

The child care learning environment will be assessed using the environment rating scales at all star levels. These scales—*Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R)*, *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)*, *School-Age Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)*, and the *Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised (FCCERS-R)*—were developed by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard Clifford at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. These tools have been extensively used in research and practice to improve the quality of the learning environment and interactions between children and teachers or providers.

At star levels three and four, administrative practices of homes and centers will be assessed. The *Program Administration Scale (PAS)*, developed by Teri N. Talan and Paula J. Bloom, will be used to measure and improve the quality of leadership and management practices of center-based early care and education programs. The *Business Administration Scale for Family Child*

The Director's Link is made possible by funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the McCormick Tribune Foundation, and is distributed free of charge to early childhood directors in Illinois.

Address corrections should be directed to:

McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership

6310 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, Illinois 60090

Phone

(800) 443-5522, ext. 5056

Fax

(847) 465-5910

E-mail

cecl@nl.edu

Web Site

<http://cecl.nl.edu>

Michael W. Louis Endowed Chair

Paula Jorde Bloom
paula.bloom@nl.edu

Faculty and Staff

Carmen Adamczyk	Robyn Kelton
Jill Bella	Heather Knapp
Lisa Boggess	Kara Lehnhardt
Linda Butkovich	Lilium Perez
Melissa Casteel	Kathleen Radice
Douglas Clark	Kathleen Rousseau
Eileen Eisenberg	Paula Steffen
Shirley Flath	Teri Talan
Lila Goldston	Debra Trude-Suter
Ann Hentschel	Barbara Volpe
Donna Jonas	Tim Walker
Janis Jones	

Director's Link

Editor	Douglas Clark douglas.clark@nl.edu
Layout	Burkat Design

Advisory Board

Kay Albrecht	Ed Greene
Vince Allocco	Luis Hernandez
Blakely Bundy	Holly Knicker
Bee Jay Ciszek	Tom Layman
Leonette Coates	Karen Ponder
Jerry Cutts	Luz Maria Solis
Chip Donohue	Margie Wallen
Joan Frankel	Lana Weiner
Stacie Goffin	Cass Wolfe

Our Mission

The McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership is dedicated to enhancing the management skills, professional orientation, and leadership capacity of early childhood administrators. The activities of the Center encompass four areas: training, technical assistance, research, and public awareness.

<http://cecl.nl.edu>

Illinois Department of Human Services
Quality Rating System – Star Levels
LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

	★	★★	★★★	★★★★
CCAP Rate Add-on	5 percent	10 percent	15 percent	20 percent
Regulatory Compliance	IDCFS license in good standing	IDCFS license in good standing	IDCFS license in good standing	IDCFS license in good standing
Learning Environment	ERS Rating of <u>3.0</u>	ERS Rating of <u>3.5</u> Receive information on National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation	Current NAFCC accreditation in good standing OR ERS Rating of <u>4.25</u>	Current NAFCC accreditation in good standing AND ERS Rating of <u>5.0</u>
Program Administration	Receive information packet: professional development and program resources; developmental screening information	Receive information on Business Administration Scale (BAS)	Current NAFCC accreditation in good standing OR BAS Rating of <u>4.25</u>	Current NAFCC accreditation in good standing AND BAS Rating of <u>5.0</u>
Provider Qualifications & Training	Meet IDCFS Licensing Standards	25 hours of training annually* (primary home provider only)	Current NAFCC accreditation in good standing OR 30 hours of training annually (primary home provider only)	Great START education Level 1 or above AND all staff current certificate in CPR/first aid.**

* Definition & examples of accepted training on INCCRRA Web site.

** All staff defined as permanent full time and part time, not substitute or temporary.

Care (BAS), developed by Drs. Talan and Bloom, will be used to measure and improve the quality of business and professional practices of family child care programs.

Staff from the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership will be partnering with local child care resource and referral agencies throughout the state to provide “Getting Ready for the PAS” and “Getting Ready for the BAS” trainings. After completing these trainings, center administrators and family child care providers will have a

basic knowledge of these scales, be able to use the tools for program improvement, and know how to prepare for their PAS or BAS assessment.

National accreditation achieved from NAFCC, NAEYC, NECPA, NACCP, NAA will be recognized at the higher star levels. Validation by the Administration of Children and Families as in compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) will also be accepted.

The application process for Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System is

administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). For information about Illinois’ QRS and applications, visit the INCCRRA Web site (www.inccrra.org) or call (866) 697-8278.

Linda Butkovich is Project Supervisor for the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership’s Quality Counts QRS initiative. Teri Talan is the Director of Research and Public Policy for the Center.

Planning Ahead

Professional Development Opportunities

Computer Training for Early Childhood Administrators—Beginner Course

January 15, 29 and February 5, 12, 2008

Sessions convene from 8:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. each day.

Administering an effective and efficient early childhood program requires expertise in technology. Let us help you improve your computer skills and integrate technology into the management of your child care program. This beginner course, funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), consists of four hands-on training sessions as well as additional content and activities delivered online. For Illinois Director Credential (IDC) purposes, this training equals 28 contact hours or two IDC management competency points. Enrollment is limited and priority will be given to administrators whose programs serve IDHS-funded children.

Location: National-Louis University, Elgin (IL) Campus

Fee: \$75, includes text and all course materials

Participants may also receive two semester hours of graduate credit (ECE534, Technology in Child Care Administration I) by paying an additional fee.

Program Administration Scale Assessor Reliability Training

January 28-31, 2008

The *Program Administration Scale* (PAS) measures leadership and management practices of center-based early care and education programs. Assessor reliability training includes an overview of reliability of the instrument, interview protocol for collecting data, and information on how to score indicators and items. Individuals who successfully complete the training are eligible to become certified PAS assessors.

This four-day training is designed for technical assistance specialists, quality monitors, management consultants, researchers, and other professionals interested in using the PAS to reliably assess early childhood leadership and management practices and help center directors improve the quality of their programs.

Location: McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership,
NLU Wheeling Campus Annex

Fee: \$850, includes all texts, handouts, and meals

Participants may receive two semester hours of graduate credit (ECE582C, Early Childhood Program Evaluation) by paying an additional fee.

Family Child Care Institute—Program Quality Evaluation

February 29 – March 1 and May 17, 2008

Funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), this institute provides an introduction to program evaluation, stressing the importance of ongoing assessment to improve program quality and practices. As a participant, you will be introduced to the *Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised* to assess the learning environment as well as other measures to assess the quality of business practices, parent satisfaction, and community responsiveness. In addition, you will learn about the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Quality Standards for Accreditation and how to begin the self-study process for accreditation.

For participants applying to Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System, this institute meets the requirements for the “Introduction to the ERS” and “Getting Ready for the BAS” training.

Location: McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership,
NLU Wheeling Campus Annex

Fee: \$100, includes texts, materials, and meals (breakfast and lunch only)

**For more information, contact Debra Trude-Suter at debra.trudesuter@nl.edu
or (800) 443-5522, ext. 5056.**

Professional Development Opportunities

Supporting Directors as the Gatekeepers to Quality

February 11-14 and May 21-22, 2008

This special training opportunity is designed for college instructors, directors of multi-site programs, education coordinators, independent consultants, and resource and referral specialists. It provides an in-depth understanding on how to use the *Program Administration Scale* (PAS) to help directors of center-based programs prepare for Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System.

Funded by the Grand Victoria Foundation, the goal of this initiative is to create a cadre of experienced program consultants who can provide technical assistance to center directors interested in applying for star levels three and four in the Illinois Quality Rating System and implementing suggested program improvements resulting from their PAS assessment. This training opportunity is limited to 15 participants. The application deadline is December 14, 2007.

Location: McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership,
NLU Wheeling Campus Annex

Fee: \$150, includes texts, materials, meals, and PAS assessor certification fee

Participants may receive two semester hours of graduate credit (ECE582C, Early Childhood Program Evaluation) by paying an additional fee.

For more information, contact Debra Trude-Suter at debra.trudesuter@nl.edu or (800) 443-5522, ext. 5056.

NLU Courses for Directors

Winter term begins January 14, 2008

Online Courses for Early Childhood Administrators

ECE 532 (2 s.h.)

Advocating for Children with Special Needs

FND503 (3 s.h.)

Historical & Philosophical Foundations of Early Childhood Education

For more information about the Early Childhood Administration degree program, contact Douglas Clark at douglas.clark@nl.edu or (800) 443-5522, ext. 5062

Half-Day Computer Workshops

Navigating the Internet

December 14, 2007

National-Louis University
Room 4036
Chicago Campus

Maximize the power of your Web browser and improve your online researching skills. Visit many popular early childhood Web sites and learn how to save and organize your favorites.

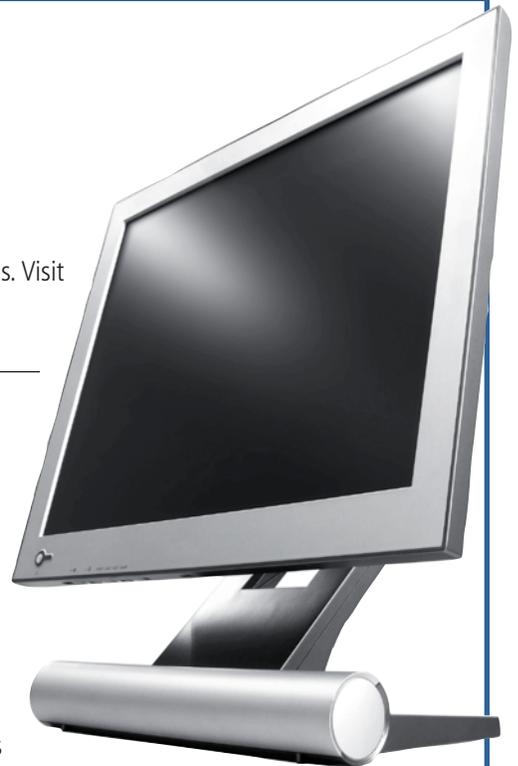
Communicating Your Marketing Message to the Digital World

January 11, 2008

National-Louis University
Room 627
North Shore Campus, Skokie, IL

Learn how to integrate technology into your program's marketing and outreach efforts by making use of print and electronic publications as well as today's "hot" Internet-based communication tools that can help keep you connected with parents and staff.

Each workshop will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Participant portion of the training cost is only \$35. Participants will receive a certificate of attendance. For more information, contact Debra Trude-Suter at (800) 443-5522, ext. 5056 or debra.trudesuter@nl.edu.



LEADERSHIP Connections

New Date and Location!

May 15-17, 2008

The Westin Chicago North Shore
601 N. Milwaukee Avenue
Wheeling, IL 60090

The Westin Chicago North Shore is located at Lake-Cook Road and Milwaukee Avenue, just 15 short miles north of O'Hare International Airport.

Our new conference home features:

- Modern spacious meeting rooms and accommodations
- Easy accessibility from major highways
- Free shuttle bus to/from public transportation
- Beautiful forest preserve views and walking paths



For more details about Leadership Connections 2008,
contact Donna Jonas at donna.jonas@nl.edu or (800) 443-5522, ext. 5058.

Getting Ready for the PAS and BAS

Two of the assessment tools used in the new Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System are the *Program Administration Scale* (PAS) and the *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care* (BAS). For eligibility at star levels 3 or 4 in Illinois Quality Counts, a center administrator must participate in formal training on the PAS and the primary family home provider must take part in formal training on the BAS.

The Illinois Network of Resource and Referral Agencies is sponsoring a series of workshops over the next few months to help center administrators and child care home providers learn more about these assessment tools.

For child care center administrators, "Getting Ready for the PAS" provides an overview of the *Program Administration Scale*. The PAS is designed to measure the quality of leadership and management practices of center-based early childhood programs. After completing this training, providers will have a basic knowledge of the PAS, be able to use the tool for program self-improvement, and know how to prepare for the PAS assessment.

For family child care providers, "Getting Ready for the BAS" provides an overview of the *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care*. The BAS is designed to assess the quality of management

practices in the family child care setting. After completing this training, providers will have a basic knowledge of the BAS, be able to use the tool for program improvement, and know how to prepare for the BAS assessment.

These trainings will be presented by staff from the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership and offered at local child care resource and referral agencies throughout Illinois. For information on dates, locations, and other details about training in your area, contact your local child care resource and referral agency office or call the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) at (866) 697-8278.