

THE CHILD CARE QUALITY RATING SYSTEM (QRS) ASSESSMENT



Maine Quality for ME

QRS Profile

April 2010



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Policy Research, Inc.



Maine Quality for ME

QRS Profile

Prepared for:**Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation**

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Child Care Quality Rating System (QRS) Assessment Study

PROFILE

Site:	Maine
Program Name:	Quality for ME
Interview Respondents:	Michel Lahti Research Faculty, University of Southern Maine Allyson Dean Director, Maine Roads to Quality
Information Reviewed and Finalized:	March 19, 2010

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Maine – Quality for ME

Program Information

This section provides general information about the QRS including the location, numbers and types of programs participating in the QRS, and goals.

Site name:	Maine
Program name:	Quality for ME
Service area:	Statewide
Pilot:	Pilot completed
Pilot time frame:	March 2007-January 2008
Date full program launched:	March 2008
Voluntary:	Partially. (As of 10/1/2009, programs receiving CCDF subsidies are required to participate.)
Website:	http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm
Eligible programs:	Center-based programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, licensed family child care, school-aged programs.
Total numbers of programs participating:	659
Number of participating child care centers:	324
Number of participating family child care programs:	335
Percent of total programs enrolled in QRS:	51% of family child care programs, 49% of center-based programs
Percent of programs at each rating level:	<p>Family Child Care:</p> <p>Step 1-35%</p> <p>Step 2-7%</p> <p>Step 3-4%</p> <p>Step 4-5%</p> <p>Centers:</p> <p>Step 1-24%</p> <p>Step 2-5%</p> <p>Step 3-6%</p> <p>Step 4-14%</p>
Goals:	<p>...to increase awareness of the basic standards of early care and education, to recognize and support providers who are providing care above and beyond those standards, and to educate the community of the benefits of higher quality care.</p> <p>-To recognize child care programs that provide quality care</p>

- To encourage providers to increase their level of quality
- To provide parents with identifiable standards of quality

Language from statute: N/A

Rating Details

This section provides details about how the rating component is structured and the process that is used to rate programs.

Rating structure:	Building blocks
Number of levels:	4
Length of time rating is valid:	3 years (Providers can re-submit to another Step at any time)
Rating process:	When providers apply via the web site, the information they provide is linked to other data. After the online session, the provider is given a provisional rating and a report with the next steps to move up the rating scale.
Method of combining points:	All the standards for the previous Step must be met before moving on to the next.
Method used to assess programs for infants/toddlers:	No
Method used to assess programs for school-aged children:	There are different indicators for school-aged children.
Different process used to assess family child care:	There are different indicators for family child care programs
Different process used to assess Head Start/Early Head Start:	There are different indicators for Head Start programs.
Different process used to assess accredited programs:	No
Events that trigger re-rating:	Changing location, licensing violation or unsuccessful verification of documentation at site visit from DHHS to review Portfolio of Evidence
Description of re-rating trigger:	If a program receives a random site visit from the DHHS to evaluate their Portfolio of evidence, and there is inconsistency between what the program reported in their application and what is observed or documented during the Portfolio Review, the DHHS will adjust the rating to correspond with the evidence collected/observed.
Appeal process:	Yes. Programs may request an administrative hearing.
Availability of technical assistance for rating process:	Yes
Description of technical assistance for rating process:	Each participating program has access to targeted technical assistance from: -The Maine Afterschool Network

-Maine's Infant/Toddler Specialist
 -The Head Start Quality Initiative
 - Maine Roads to Quality
 -The Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies
 -Maine's eight local Resource Development Centers

An Education Specialist at the Resource Development Center will receive a copy of a program's profile and will be available to assist in making quality improvements that will qualify them to move to the next Step within the system.

Availability of technical assistance for preparatory process: Yes

Description of technical assistance for preparatory process: Technical assistance is provided to providers during the application process.

Quality Indicators for Center-Based Programs

This section describes the indicators used in a QRS to assess the quality of center-based programs. The indicators are divided into the following categories: licensing compliance, ratio and group size, health and safety, curriculum, environment, child assessment, staff qualifications, family partnership, administration and management, cultural/linguistic diversity, accreditation, community involvement and provisions for children with special needs. A QRS may not have indicators in one or more of these categories, and the category labels used in the profile may differ from the site-specific category names used in a QRS.

Number of site-specific indicator categories: N/A

Site-specific names of categories used in the QRS: Quality for ME does not use categories for their indicators.

Licensing Compliance (centers)

Licensing requirements frequently serve as a minimal set of provisions to ensure that care and education environments are safe, healthy and provide for children's basic needs. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Licensing compliance included: Yes

Licensing required for enrollment: Yes

Licensing equivalent to the first level: Yes

Licensing compliance referred to within: N/A

Source of evidence: Licensing status verified through the DHHS licensing database, MACWIS. Licensing compliance verified by DHHS staff who review

program's records by hand (paper file).

Comments:

All licensed programs are eligible to be placed at Step 1 if they have been licensed for one year. They must have had no substantiated serious licensing violations within the last year (Step 2) or 3 years (Step 3).

Ratio and Group Size (centers)

Ratio and group size requirements are frequently established in state licensing regulations. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Ratio and group size indicators included:

No

Health and Safety (centers)

Provisions for health and safety are frequently established in state licensing regulations. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Health and safety indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales, which are used in some QRSs.

Health and safety indicators included:

No

Curriculum (centers)

A curriculum is a written document that provides a plan for intentional activities and interactions in an early childhood program. Indicators described in this section refer to requirements for the use of particular curricula or to demonstration that certain features of curriculum are in place. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Curriculum indicators included:

Yes

Description:

Step 2 & 3:

-The program must have a written method for curriculum planning that includes planning from children's interests and skills.
-The curriculum must guide the development of a daily schedule that is predictable, yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children. The schedule must provide time and support for transitions, include both indoor and outdoor experiences, and is responsive to the child's need to rest or be active (Also noted in Environment).

Step 3:

The Early Childhood Learning guidelines (ECLG) and/or Infant Toddler Learning Guidelines (ITLG) must be on site, available to staff, and referenced during curriculum planning.

Step 4:

The program's curriculum and authentic assessment of children are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines for children ages 3-5 and Maine's Infant and Toddler Learning Guidelines for children 6 weeks to 3 years.

Curriculum review process:	No
Approved curricula identified:	No
Curriculum referred to within:	N/A
Curriculum source of evidence:	Documentation submitted

Environment (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to features of the classroom environment. Further details about Observational Measures included in the QRS are included in a section below. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Environment indicators included:	Yes
Environment Rating Scales (ERS) included:	No. (See Comments)
Additional indicators related to the environment (e.g., activities, interactions, specific features)	<p>Step 2 & 3:</p> <p>The curriculum must guide the development of a daily schedule that is predictable, yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children. The schedule must provide time and support for transitions, include both indoor and outdoor experiences, and is responsive to the child's need to rest or be active (Also noted in Curriculum).</p>
Environment referred to within:	N/A
Environment source of evidence:	Documentation Submitted
Comments:	Environment Rating Scale scores are used to validate the Steps (for the QRS evaluation), but not to rate individual programs. Quality for ME is collecting data from providers by type of setting and STEP level, and validating it using the Environment Rating Scales. Programs receive a report on the Environment Rating Scale score. However, none of the scores are connected to

STEPS or standards of QRS.

Child Assessment (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to processes in place to assess, observe or monitor children's development on a regular basis. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at:

<http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Child assessment indicators included:	Yes
Description:	<p>Step 2: Evidence is collected 2 times per year on children's development in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social/Emotional -Cognitive -Physical (gross and fine motor) development -Communication <p>Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, and photographs. This evidence must be incorporated into curriculum planning. For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development. For programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines that are used as a guide for planning.</p> <p>Step 3: Same as Step 2, but the frequency is 3 times per year.</p>
Child assessment review process:	No
Approved child assessments identified:	No
Child assessment referred to within:	N/A
Child assessment source of evidence:	Documentation submitted; observation

Staff Qualifications (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to specific educational or training requirements for staff. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Staff qualification indicators included:	Yes
Indicators for teachers include:	Education, training, years of experience, participation in Maine's Road to Quality (MRTQ) Career Lattice, and registration in Maine's Roads

<p>Indicators for directors include:</p>	<p>to Quality Registry. Training, participation in Maine’s Road to Quality (MRTQ) Career Lattice, and registration in Maine’s Roads to Quality Registry.</p>
<p>Directors qualifications related to administration and management</p>	<p>Yes, at Step 4</p>
<p>Bachelors degree indicator for director:</p>	<p>Yes (an option in the MRTQ Career lattice for practitioners)</p>
<p>Bachelors degree indicator for teacher:</p>	<p>Yes (an option in the MRTQ Career lattice for practitioners)</p>
<p>Bachelors degree indicator for assistant teacher:</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Description:</p>	<p>Step 1: -100% of staff members are registered in Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) Registry.</p> <p>Step 2 -100% of direct service staff members (including executive staff who work with children) are registered in MRTQ Registry. -1 teacher or staff member responsible for educational programming has completed the training in Maine’s Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. -At least 50% of lead teachers are at a Level 5 or above on the MRTQ Career Lattice.</p> <p>Step 3 -50% of lead teachers working with children ages 3-5 have completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine’s Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. -At least 50% of staff members in direct care positions are at least a Level 5 on MRTQ Career Lattice or meet NAEYC candidacy requirements and provide appropriate documentation verifying candidacy status. - All staff have a professional development plan prepared annually and 10 hours of professional growth activities per year above the regulatory minimum distributed across core knowledge areas which can include in-service trainings.</p> <p>Step 4 -Each classroom with 3-5 year olds has a lead teacher who has completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine’s Early Childhood Learning Guidelines.</p>

-Director is at a level 5 or above on the MRTQ Administrative/Management Coordination Career Lattice OR at a level 6 or above on the MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice AND 50% of lead teachers are at level 6 or above on MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice. (Programs that meet NAEYC candidacy requirements may substitute verification of candidacy for the aforementioned professional development standard.)

Staff qualifications referred to within:

N/A

Staff qualifications source of evidence

Documentation submitted; verified online

Family Partnership (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to activities and strategies to involve and engage families. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Family partnership indicators included:

Yes

Description:

Step 2:

-The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff, administrators and families.

-The program has a parent handbook that describes licensing requirements as well as policies and procedures around attendance, discipline, health and safety, field trips, and holidays.

-The program has a written philosophy about the relationship between the parents and the program, which is shared with parents when their children are enrolled.

-The program makes families aware of local and state resources available to them. These resources may include: Resource Development Centers, Child Development Services, Maine Parent Federation, WIC, MaineCare, local community events, among others. Ways to inform parents of these resources may include: parent resource library, bulletin boards, enrollment packets etc. Program maintains current and accurate information about community resources by connecting with their local Resource Development Center 2 times per year.

Step 3:

- Parents are offered at least 2 parent conferences a year to discuss the child’s progress, behavior, and social and physical needs.
- Parent surveys are conducted annually. The survey tool must be approved by DHHS or the program may use the one provided by DHHS.
- Parents of infants and toddlers are provided with written daily communication about their child’s day.
- Program has a parent advisory/involvement group and provides opportunities for parent involvement in the program that embody the written philosophy of parent-program relationship.

Step 4:
 Program has a documented plan to involve families and offer opportunities for individualized parent involvement. This can include:

- Volunteering (not-for-profit centers only)
- Sharing a meal with their child
- Talent show
- Circle time with a parent
- Barbeque
- Fundraiser

Family partnership referred to within:	N/A
Family partnership source of evidence:	Documentation

Administration and Management (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to features of the administration and management of the program. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Administration and management indicators included:	Yes
Description:	<p>Step 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Programs hold staff meetings on a monthly basis. -Programs have an employee handbook detailing policies for—at minimum—hiring and firing, advancement, grievance, sexual harassment, and child abuse reporting. -All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor. -The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff, administrators and families.

Step 3:

- The program is evaluated yearly using a self assessment tool (Accreditation Guidelines, Head Start Standards, age appropriate environment rating scale, High Scope) and has a written improvement plan based upon findings of a comprehensive self-assessment designed to analyze all aspects of the program.
- Programs must offer staff a benefit package including, at minimum, 2 of the following: reduced child care rates for children of staff, tuition reimbursement, paid training, mileage reimbursement for training and education, health insurance, dental insurance, disability insurance, retirement plan, paid vacation, paid sick time, paid personal time, paid holidays.
- Programs must offer staff the opportunity to participate in the development and /or revision of program policies.

Step 4:

- Programs has a plan to implement a salary scale that is based on professional qualifications, length of employment, and performance evaluation.

Administration and management referred to within: N/A

Administration and management source of evidence: Documentation submitted; observation

Cultural/Linguistic Diversity (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to provisions for responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Cultural/Linguistic Diversity indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Cultural/linguistic diversity indicators included: No

Accreditation (centers)

Indicators described in this section refer to accreditation by a national accrediting body. Accreditation is a process in which programs demonstrate that they meet standards set forth by the accrediting body. The standards are determined by the accrediting body. There is not a common set of standards used for early childhood program accreditation. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) and the Council on Accreditation (COA) are commonly included accreditation systems used in QRSs for center-based programs.

Accreditation included: Yes

If yes, accreditation is:	One criterion in highest rating.
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Community Involvement (centers)

Indicators described in this section refer to the type or frequency of involvement in the community. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Community involvement indicators included:	Yes
Comments:	Step 4: The program must maintain current and accurate information about community resources by connecting with their local Resource Development Center 2 times per year.

Provisions for Children with Special Needs (centers)

Indicators described in this section refer to provisions for children with special needs and the extent to which programs meet standards for inclusion of children with disabilities or other limiting conditions. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Provisions for Children with Special Needs indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Indicators that specify provisions for children with special needs included:	No
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Indicators for Family Child Care Programs

This section describes the indicators used in a QRS to assess the quality of family child care programs. The indicators are divided into the following categories: licensing compliance, ratio and group size, health and safety, curriculum, environment, child assessment, staff qualifications, family partnership, administration and management, cultural/linguistic diversity, accreditation, community involvement and provisions for children with special needs. A QRS may not have indicators in one or more of these categories, and these category labels may not be used in their QRS.

Number of site-specific indicator categories:	N/A
Site-specific names of categories used in the QRS:	Quality for ME does not use categories for their indicators.

Licensing Compliance (family child care)

Licensing requirements frequently serve as a minimal set of provisions to ensure that care and education environments are safe, healthy and provide for children's basic needs. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Licensing compliance included:	Yes
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Licensing required for enrollment:	Yes
Licensing equivalent to the first level	Yes
Licensing compliance referred to within:	N/A
Source of evidence:	Licensing status verified through DHHS database, MACWIS. Licensing compliance verified by DHHS staff review of program's paper file.
Comments:	All licensed programs are eligible to be placed at Step 1 if they have been licensed for one year. They must have had no substantiated serious licensing violations within the last year (Step 2) or 3 years (Step 3).

Ratio (family child care)

Ratio and group size requirements are frequently established in state licensing regulations. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Ratio and group size indicators included:	No
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Health and Safety (family child care)

Provisions for health and safety are frequently established in state licensing regulations. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Health and safety indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Health and safety indicators included:	No
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Curriculum (family child care)

A curriculum is a written document that provides a plan for intentional activities and interactions in an early childhood program. Indicators described in this section refer to requirements for the use of particular curricula or to demonstration that certain features of curriculum are in place. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Curriculum indicators included:	Yes
Description:	<p>Steps 2 & 3: Programs must have a written method for curriculum planning that includes planning from children's interests and skills.</p> <p>Steps 3 & 4: The Early Childhood Learning guidelines (ECLG)</p>

	and/or Infant Toddler Learning Guidelines (ITLG) must be on site, available to staff, and referenced during curriculum planning.
Curriculum review process:	No
Approved curricula identified:	No
Curriculum referred to within:	N/A
Curriculum source of evidence:	Documentation

Environment (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to features of the classroom environment. Further details about Observational Measures included in the QRS are included in a section below. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Environment indicators included:	Yes
Environment Rating Scales (ERS) included:	No (See Comments)
Additional indicators related to the environment (e.g., activities, interactions, specific features)	Steps 2 & 3: The program must follow a daily schedule and the learning environment must support the interests of the children.
Environment referred to within:	N/A
Environment source of evidence:	Documentation Submitted
Comments:	Environment Rating Scale scores are used to validate the Steps, but not to rate individual programs. Quality for ME is collecting data from providers by type of setting and STEP level, and validating it using the Environment Rating Scales. Programs receive a report on the Environment Rating Scale score. However, none of the scores are connected to STEPS or standards of QRS.

Child Assessment (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to processes in place to assess, observe or monitor children's development on a regular basis. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Child assessment indicators included:	Yes
Description:	Step 3: Evidence is collected 3 times per year on children's development in the following areas: -Social/Emotional

-Cognitive
 -Physical (gross and fine motor) development
 -Communication

Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, photographs. This evidence is incorporated in curriculum planning.

For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development and for programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines which are used as a guide for planning.

Step 4:

Same as Step 3, but the frequency is 4 times per year.

Child assessment review process:	No
Approved child assessments identified:	No
Child assessment referred to within:	N/A
Child assessment source of evidence:	Documentation submitted; observation

Staff qualifications (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to specific educational or training requirements for staff. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Staff qualification indicators included:	Yes
Indicators for family child care providers include:	Education, training, and a level on the Maine Roads To Quality Direct Care Career Lattice
Family child care qualifications related to administration and management	No
Bachelors degree indicator for family child care provider:	Yes (As an option in the MRTQ Career lattice)
Description:	<p>Step 1:</p> <p>-All staff holds qualifications according to regulations for licensed programs. -100% of permanent/regular staff members are registered in MRTQ Registry.</p> <p>Step 2:</p> <p>-100% of direct service members who work with children are registered in MRTQ Registry. -Owner/Director is at Level 3 or above on the</p>

MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice.

-The assistant, unless a family member, has a written job description defining responsibilities. The provider offers an annual review of the assistant's job performance.

Step 3:

-Owner/Director is at level 4 or above on the MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice and holds a valid CDA or degree in ECE or a related degree, has a professional development plan prepared annually, 10 hours of professional growth activities per year above the regulatory minimum.

-Consistency of care: Children are not left with a substitute more than 20% of the time (such as 1 hour per every 5 hours, or 1 day per 5 day week, may be averaged over time)

Step 4:

-Provider has completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines, if serving children ages 3-5.

Staff qualifications referred to within:	N/A
Staff qualifications source of evidence	Documentation submitted

Family Partnership (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to activities and strategies to involve and engage families. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Family partnership indicators included:	Yes
Description:	<p>Step 2:</p> <p>-The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff, administrators, and families.</p> <p>-The provider gives written policies to parents: areas covered in written policies include substitute care arrangement, persons authorized to pick up child, illness, administering medication, emergencies, guidance and discipline, parent conferences and visits, if relevant, religious teaching and activities and if relevant, transportation and/or field trips.</p>

Step 3:

-The program has a written philosophy about the relationship between the parents and the program, which is shared with parents when their children are enrolled.

-The program makes families aware of local and state resources available to them. These resources may include: Resource Development Centers, Child Development Services, Maine Parent Federation, WIC, MaineCare, local community events, etc. Ways to inform parents of these resources may include: Parent resource library, bulletin boards, enrollment packets, etc.

-The provider gathers information about children’s interests and needs through observation and conversations with parents. This information is used to set goals that support the children’s development.

-Parents are offered at least 1 parent conference a year to discuss the child’s progress, behavior, social and physical needs.

-Parent Surveys are done annually. The survey tool must be approved by DHHS or the program may use the one provided by DHHS.

-Parents of infants and toddlers are provided with written daily communication about their child’s day.

Step 4:

Program has a documented plan to involve families and offer opportunities for individualized parent involvement. This can include:

- Volunteering (not-for-profit centers only)
- Sharing a meal with their child
- Talent show
- Circle time with a parent
- Barbeque
- Fundraiser

Family partnership referred to within:

N/A

Family partnership source of evidence:

Documentation submitted

Administration and Management (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to features of the administration and management of the program. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Administration and management indicators included:

Yes

Description:

Step 2:

- Programs (including FCC providers who employ staff) hold staff meetings on a monthly basis.
- Programs (including FCC providers who employ staff not related to them) have an employee handbook detailing policies for at least hiring and firing, advancement, grievance, sexual harassment, and child abuse reporting.
- The assistant, unless a family member, has a written job description defining responsibilities. The provider offers an annual review of the assistant’s job performance.
- The provider gives written policies to parents: areas covered in written policies include- substitute care arrangement, persons authorized to pick up child, illness, administering medication, emergencies, guidance and discipline, parent conferences and visits, if relevant, transportation and/or field trips.
- The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff and families.

Step 3:

- The program is evaluated yearly using a self-assessment tool and has a written improvement plan based upon findings of a comprehensive self-assessment designed to analyze all aspects of the program.
- The provider gathers information about children’s interests and needs through observation and conversations with parents. She uses this information to set goals that support the children’s development.
- Consistency of care- Children are not left with a substitute more than 20% of the time (such as 1 hour per every 5 hours, or 1 day per 5 day week, may be averaged over time)

Step 4:

- The assistant, unless a family member, is paid at least the minimum wage. If the assistant works more than 15 hours a week, the provider pays the employer’s share of social security and workers’ compensation.

Administration and management referred to within:

N/A

Administration and management source of evidence:

Documentation submitted

Cultural/Linguistic Diversity (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to provisions for responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Cultural/Linguistic Diversity indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Cultural/linguistic diversity indicators included:	No
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Accreditation (family child care)

Indicators described in this section refer to accreditation by a national accrediting body. Accreditation is a process in which programs demonstrate that they meet standards set forth by the accrediting body. The standards are determined by the accrediting body. There is not a common set of standards used for early childhood program accreditation. Accreditation by the National Association of Family Child Care is a commonly included accreditation used in QRSs for family child care programs.

Accreditation included:	Yes
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If yes, accreditation is:	One criterion in highest rating.
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Community Involvement (family child care)

Indicators described in this section refer to the type or frequency of involvement in the community. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Community involvement indicators included:	Yes
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Comments:	Steps 3 & 4: Programs must maintain current and accurate information about community resources by connecting with their local Resource Development Center two times per year.
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Provisions for Children with Special Needs (family child care)

Indicators described in this section refer to provisions for children with special needs and the extent to which programs meet standards for inclusion of children with disabilities or other limiting conditions. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Provisions for Children with Special Needs indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Indicators that specify provisions for children with special needs included:	No
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Application Process

Information in this section describes specific features of the application process in the QRS.

Requires self-assessment tool:	Yes
Describe self-assessment tool:	<p>All providers must self-evaluate their program against the standards at each step.</p> <p>Family Child Care: The program is evaluated yearly using a comprehensive self-assessment designed to analyze all aspects of the program. A written improvement plan is developed based upon findings from the self-assessment.</p> <p>Center-based: The program is evaluated yearly using a comprehensive self-assessment tool designed to analyze all aspects of the program (Accreditation Guidelines, Head Start Standards, age appropriate environment rating scale, High Scope) and has a written improvement plan based upon findings from this assessment.</p>
Availability of preparatory process:	Yes
Describe preparatory process:	<p>Providers can get assistance from resource and referral agencies, education specialist personnel funded by state Department of Health and Human Services, and from Maine Road to Quality.</p> <p>Providers apply using a web-based application. They go through the application on-line and are given a preliminary/temporary Step Rating. The Step rating is then is verified by the Department of Health and Human Services.</p>
Requires orientation:	No
Describe orientation:	There is an optional orientation session for providers.
Time from application to rating:	Typically 2-3 weeks
Can apply for particular rating:	Yes

Outreach

This section describes the strategies that a QRS uses to disseminate information to parents, providers/programs, and the public.

Outreach to parents:	No
Method of outreach to parents:	There is no statewide marketing plan to date for Quality for ME. There are plans to have a web site launched with a search tool for parents looking for providers. Information will be provided on Step level and staff qualifications for each specific center.
Outreach to providers:	Yes
Method of outreach to providers:	Website, written materials available through mailing and disseminated through QRS contractors/partners, information given to providers via QRS contractors/partners, and information is available in languages other than English.
Outreach to public:	No
Method of outreach to public:	Website is planned.
Percent of budget dedicated to marketing:	There is no budget dedicated to marketing.

Use of Observational Tools

The information in this section provides further detail about observational tools used in the QRS.

Observational tools used:	N/A. Environment Rating Scales are only used in the evaluation of Quality for ME. There are no observational tools linked to program ratings. However, programs do receive a report from their Environment Rating Scale visit.
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Improvement Process

This section provides information about the strategies used to provide or support quality improvement in the QRS.

Training available that is linked to QRS:	Yes
Content of linked training:	Training on Maine's Early Learning Guidelines
Total duration of training:	30 hours
Trainer approval process:	No
Target population for training:	All providers
Onsite assistance available that is linked to QRS:	Yes
Content of linked onsite assistance:	Varies

Onsite assistance frequency	Varies. The frequency of on-site assistance is unlimited.
Length of onsite sessions	Varies. The length of on-site assistance is unlimited.
Total duration of onsite assistance:	Varies. The total duration of onsite assistance is unlimited.
Formal approval for onsite assistance provider:	Yes
Target population for onsite assistance:	Higher quality levels
Comments about improvement process:	Maine uses the collaborative consultation model for on-site assistance. Only programs in the QRS at higher levels (Steps 3 & 4) are eligible for collaborative consultation. Lower level programs receive on-site visits and a site report. At level 3, programs receive a one-time site visit. At level 4, programs receive a site visit and an improvement plan and goals must be in place that the trainer and provider are working towards.

Financial Incentives

A variety of strategies may be used to provide financial incentives to providers to participate in the QRS or to support quality improvement efforts. This section provides information about different financial incentives.

Tiered reimbursement:	<p>There is a 10% quality subsidy reimbursement differential for each child whose care is subsidized by the Department of Health and Human Services- Early Childhood Division for programs that have reached Step 4.</p> <p>There is a 5% progress differential for each child whose care is subsidized for programs that have reached Step 3 and that have submitted program descriptions and are awaiting a scheduled visit from one of the accrediting bodies.</p> <p>There is a 2% increase for programs that have reached Step 2 .</p>
Quality award/bonus:	No
Startup award:	No
Scholarship (T.E.A.C.H)	Providers who are income eligible are eligible for scholarships to pursue early childhood education degrees. These scholarships are only available for QRS participants.
Wage enhancement	No
Retention bonus:	No
Improvement grants:	Programs that pay state taxes and have a Quality Improvement Plan may apply for a Child Care Investment Tax Credit for expenses made to

Comments on financial incentives:	improve quality. Parents of any child enrolled in programs at Step 4 level are eligible to receive a double child care tax credit on their state income tax. QRS enrolled providers are waived the registry fee for Maine and the accreditation process is subsidized.
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Administration Details

This section provides details about the QRS administration and funding.

QRS lead :	Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services
QRS lead type:	State government agency
Overall funding amount for most recent fiscal year:	Information not available
Overall funding sources:	Child Care Development Fund

Partners

This section provides information about the roles and responsibilities of partners in the QRS.

Partner 1 type :	University
Partner 1 name:	University of Maine at Orono University of Southern Maine
Partner 1 function:	Collect/validate information to assign the rating, conduct observational assessments, provide technical assistance and quality improvement services, provide system navigation support, and data collection.
Work plan in place:	Yes
Partner 2:	State agency
Partner 2 name:	Bureau of Taxation
Partner 2 function:	Quality for ME has a Memorandum Of Understanding for information sharing with the Bureau of Taxation
Work plan in place:	No
Partner 3 type :	State agency
Partner 3 name:	Department of Education
Partner 3 function:	Quality for ME shares training for pre-kindergarten with the Department of Education.
Work plan in place:	No

Partner 4 type :	Resource and Referral Agency
Partner 4 name:	Resource Development Centers (6 regionally based)
Partner 4 function:	Provide technical assistance and quality improvement services, provide system navigation support, and manage communication/information dissemination.
Work plan in place:	Yes

Linkage of QRS with Other Systems

This section provides information about how the QRS is linked with other systems/standards including child care subsidies, professional development, state early learning guidelines, and core knowledge /competencies for providers.

Child care subsidies:	Yes
Description:	Subsidy is linked to the tiered reimbursement incentives described above.
Professional development:	Yes
Description	Participants must be members of the Maine Road's Early Care and Education Career Development Registry prior to application. QRS providers participate in Maine's Road to Quality Direct Care Career Lattice and Registry.
Incorporation of other standards:	Yes
Description:	Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines Head Start Performance Standards Core Competencies

Evaluation

Status of evaluation:	Ongoing
List research questions for ongoing evaluation:	Data Capacity Grant questions (internal evaluation): Is there a difference between programs enrolled and those not enrolled in levels of quality, and the way they progress through levels of quality? Does the QRS system make a difference? For current year only: How is authentic assessment for infants and toddlers being met in

the highest quality (Step 4) programs?

The external evaluation has two components. In one, they are evaluating the implementation of the QRS state-wide. This evaluation essentially focuses on assessing the validity of the Step Levels by program type. The other component is a separate US DHHS funded project whereby there are randomly assigned programs followed over a period of time to learn more about the kinds of supports QRS sites are using to improve quality, etc. There is also an exploratory case study that is focused on understanding more about how providers are using assessments to improve program quality.

Evaluator type:	External and Internal
Evaluator name (if external)	University of Southern Maine University of Maine, Orono
If external, was RFP issued:	No
Published reports to date :	N/A

Key Contacts

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Category :	Data systems, monitoring and evaluation
Contact name:	Alan Cobo-Lewis
Organization:	University of Maine, Orono

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Phone:

References

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND).

State of Maine Early Care and Education Quality Rating System (Quality for ME) Application Manual.

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

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND). Quality for ME Standards: Center Based Child Care Programs. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND). Quality for ME Standards: Family Child Care Programs. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND). Quality for ME Standards: Head Start Child Care Programs. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND). Quality for ME Standards: School Age Child Care Programs. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.

Maine – Quality for ME

Program Information

This section provides general information about the QRS including the location, numbers and types of programs participating in the QRS, and goals.

Site name:	Maine
Program name:	Quality for ME
Service area:	Statewide
Pilot:	Pilot completed
Pilot time frame:	March 2007-January 2008
Date full program launched:	March 2008
Voluntary:	Partially. (As of 10/1/2009, programs receiving CCDF subsidies are required to participate.)
Website:	http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm
Eligible programs:	Center-based programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, licensed family child care, school-aged programs.
Total numbers of programs participating:	659
Number of participating child care centers:	324
Number of participating family child care programs:	335
Percent of total programs enrolled in QRS:	51% of family child care programs, 49% of center-based programs
Percent of programs at each rating level:	<p>Family Child Care:</p> <p>Step 1-35%</p> <p>Step 2-7%</p> <p>Step 3-4%</p> <p>Step 4-5%</p> <p>Centers:</p> <p>Step 1-24%</p> <p>Step 2-5%</p> <p>Step 3-6%</p> <p>Step 4-14%</p>
Goals:	<p>...to increase awareness of the basic standards of early care and education, to recognize and support providers who are providing care above and beyond those standards, and to educate the community of the benefits of higher quality care.</p> <p>-To recognize child care programs that provide quality care</p>

- To encourage providers to increase their level of quality
- To provide parents with identifiable standards of quality

Language from statute: N/A

Rating Details

This section provides details about how the rating component is structured and the process that is used to rate programs.

Rating structure:	Building blocks
Number of levels:	4
Length of time rating is valid:	3 years (Providers can re-submit to another Step at any time)
Rating process:	When providers apply via the web site, the information they provide is linked to other data. After the online session, the provider is given a provisional rating and a report with the next steps to move up the rating scale.
Method of combining points:	All the standards for the previous Step must be met before moving on to the next.
Method used to assess programs for infants/toddlers:	No
Method used to assess programs for school-aged children:	There are different indicators for school-aged children.
Different process used to assess family child care:	There are different indicators for family child care programs
Different process used to assess Head Start/Early Head Start:	There are different indicators for Head Start programs.
Different process used to assess accredited programs:	No
Events that trigger re-rating:	Changing location, licensing violation or unsuccessful verification of documentation at site visit from DHHS to review Portfolio of Evidence
Description of re-rating trigger:	If a program receives a random site visit from the DHHS to evaluate their Portfolio of evidence, and there is inconsistency between what the program reported in their application and what is observed or documented during the Portfolio Review, the DHHS will adjust the rating to correspond with the evidence collected/observed.
Appeal process:	Yes. Programs may request an administrative hearing.
Availability of technical assistance for rating process:	Yes
Description of technical assistance for rating process:	Each participating program has access to targeted technical assistance from: -The Maine Afterschool Network

-Maine's Infant/Toddler Specialist
 -The Head Start Quality Initiative
 - Maine Roads to Quality
 -The Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies
 -Maine's eight local Resource Development Centers

An Education Specialist at the Resource Development Center will receive a copy of a program's profile and will be available to assist in making quality improvements that will qualify them to move to the next Step within the system.

Availability of technical assistance for preparatory process: Yes

Description of technical assistance for preparatory process: Technical assistance is provided to providers during the application process.

Quality Indicators for Center-Based Programs

This section describes the indicators used in a QRS to assess the quality of center-based programs. The indicators are divided into the following categories: licensing compliance, ratio and group size, health and safety, curriculum, environment, child assessment, staff qualifications, family partnership, administration and management, cultural/linguistic diversity, accreditation, community involvement and provisions for children with special needs. A QRS may not have indicators in one or more of these categories, and the category labels used in the profile may differ from the site-specific category names used in a QRS.

Number of site-specific indicator categories: N/A

Site-specific names of categories used in the QRS: Quality for ME does not use categories for their indicators.

Licensing Compliance (centers)

Licensing requirements frequently serve as a minimal set of provisions to ensure that care and education environments are safe, healthy and provide for children's basic needs. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Licensing compliance included: Yes

Licensing required for enrollment: Yes

Licensing equivalent to the first level: Yes

Licensing compliance referred to within: N/A

Source of evidence: Licensing status verified through the DHHS licensing database, MACWIS. Licensing compliance verified by DHHS staff who review

program's records by hand (paper file).

Comments:

All licensed programs are eligible to be placed at Step 1 if they have been licensed for one year. They must have had no substantiated serious licensing violations within the last year (Step 2) or 3 years (Step 3).

Ratio and Group Size (centers)

Ratio and group size requirements are frequently established in state licensing regulations. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Ratio and group size indicators included:

No

Health and Safety (centers)

Provisions for health and safety are frequently established in state licensing regulations. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Health and safety indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales, which are used in some QRSs.

Health and safety indicators included:

No

Curriculum (centers)

A curriculum is a written document that provides a plan for intentional activities and interactions in an early childhood program. Indicators described in this section refer to requirements for the use of particular curricula or to demonstration that certain features of curriculum are in place. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Curriculum indicators included:

Yes

Description:

Step 2 & 3:

-The program must have a written method for curriculum planning that includes planning from children's interests and skills.
-The curriculum must guide the development of a daily schedule that is predictable, yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children. The schedule must provide time and support for transitions, include both indoor and outdoor experiences, and is responsive to the child's need to rest or be active (Also noted in Environment).

Step 3:

The Early Childhood Learning guidelines (ECLG) and/or Infant Toddler Learning Guidelines (ITLG) must be on site, available to staff, and referenced during curriculum planning.

Step 4:

The program's curriculum and authentic assessment of children are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines for children ages 3-5 and Maine's Infant and Toddler Learning Guidelines for children 6 weeks to 3 years.

Curriculum review process:	No
Approved curricula identified:	No
Curriculum referred to within:	N/A
Curriculum source of evidence:	Documentation submitted

Environment (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to features of the classroom environment. Further details about Observational Measures included in the QRS are included in a section below. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Environment indicators included:	Yes
Environment Rating Scales (ERS) included:	No. (See Comments)
Additional indicators related to the environment (e.g., activities, interactions, specific features)	<p>Step 2 & 3:</p> <p>The curriculum must guide the development of a daily schedule that is predictable, yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children. The schedule must provide time and support for transitions, include both indoor and outdoor experiences, and is responsive to the child's need to rest or be active (Also noted in Curriculum).</p>
Environment referred to within:	N/A
Environment source of evidence:	Documentation Submitted
Comments:	Environment Rating Scale scores are used to validate the Steps (for the QRS evaluation), but not to rate individual programs. Quality for ME is collecting data from providers by type of setting and STEP level, and validating it using the Environment Rating Scales. Programs receive a report on the Environment Rating Scale score. However, none of the scores are connected to

STEPS or standards of QRS.

Child Assessment (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to processes in place to assess, observe or monitor children's development on a regular basis. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at:

<http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Child assessment indicators included:	Yes
Description:	<p>Step 2: Evidence is collected 2 times per year on children's development in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social/Emotional -Cognitive -Physical (gross and fine motor) development -Communication <p>Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, and photographs. This evidence must be incorporated into curriculum planning. For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development. For programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines that are used as a guide for planning.</p> <p>Step 3: Same as Step 2, but the frequency is 3 times per year.</p>
Child assessment review process:	No
Approved child assessments identified:	No
Child assessment referred to within:	N/A
Child assessment source of evidence:	Documentation submitted; observation

Staff Qualifications (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to specific educational or training requirements for staff. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Staff qualification indicators included:	Yes
Indicators for teachers include:	Education, training, years of experience, participation in Maine's Road to Quality (MRTQ) Career Lattice, and registration in Maine's Roads

<p>Indicators for directors include:</p>	<p>to Quality Registry. Training, participation in Maine’s Road to Quality (MRTQ) Career Lattice, and registration in Maine’s Roads to Quality Registry.</p>
<p>Directors qualifications related to administration and management</p>	<p>Yes, at Step 4</p>
<p>Bachelors degree indicator for director:</p>	<p>Yes (an option in the MRTQ Career lattice for practitioners)</p>
<p>Bachelors degree indicator for teacher:</p>	<p>Yes (an option in the MRTQ Career lattice for practitioners)</p>
<p>Bachelors degree indicator for assistant teacher:</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Description:</p>	<p>Step 1: -100% of staff members are registered in Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) Registry.</p> <p>Step 2 -100% of direct service staff members (including executive staff who work with children) are registered in MRTQ Registry. -1 teacher or staff member responsible for educational programming has completed the training in Maine’s Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. -At least 50% of lead teachers are at a Level 5 or above on the MRTQ Career Lattice.</p> <p>Step 3 -50% of lead teachers working with children ages 3-5 have completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine’s Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. -At least 50% of staff members in direct care positions are at least a Level 5 on MRTQ Career Lattice or meet NAEYC candidacy requirements and provide appropriate documentation verifying candidacy status. - All staff have a professional development plan prepared annually and 10 hours of professional growth activities per year above the regulatory minimum distributed across core knowledge areas which can include in-service trainings.</p> <p>Step 4 -Each classroom with 3-5 year olds has a lead teacher who has completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine’s Early Childhood Learning Guidelines.</p>

-Director is at a level 5 or above on the MRTQ Administrative/Management Coordination Career Lattice OR at a level 6 or above on the MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice AND 50% of lead teachers are at level 6 or above on MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice. (Programs that meet NAEYC candidacy requirements may substitute verification of candidacy for the aforementioned professional development standard.)

Staff qualifications referred to within:

N/A

Staff qualifications source of evidence

Documentation submitted; verified online

Family Partnership (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to activities and strategies to involve and engage families. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Family partnership indicators included:

Yes

Description:

Step 2:

-The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff, administrators and families.

-The program has a parent handbook that describes licensing requirements as well as policies and procedures around attendance, discipline, health and safety, field trips, and holidays.

-The program has a written philosophy about the relationship between the parents and the program, which is shared with parents when their children are enrolled.

-The program makes families aware of local and state resources available to them. These resources may include: Resource Development Centers, Child Development Services, Maine Parent Federation, WIC, MaineCare, local community events, among others. Ways to inform parents of these resources may include: parent resource library, bulletin boards, enrollment packets etc. Program maintains current and accurate information about community resources by connecting with their local Resource Development Center 2 times per year.

Step 3:

- Parents are offered at least 2 parent conferences a year to discuss the child’s progress, behavior, and social and physical needs.
- Parent surveys are conducted annually. The survey tool must be approved by DHHS or the program may use the one provided by DHHS.
- Parents of infants and toddlers are provided with written daily communication about their child’s day.
- Program has a parent advisory/involvement group and provides opportunities for parent involvement in the program that embody the written philosophy of parent-program relationship.

Step 4:
 Program has a documented plan to involve families and offer opportunities for individualized parent involvement. This can include:

- Volunteering (not-for-profit centers only)
- Sharing a meal with their child
- Talent show
- Circle time with a parent
- Barbeque
- Fundraiser

Family partnership referred to within:	N/A
Family partnership source of evidence:	Documentation

Administration and Management (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to features of the administration and management of the program. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Administration and management indicators included:	Yes
Description:	<p>Step 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Programs hold staff meetings on a monthly basis. -Programs have an employee handbook detailing policies for—at minimum—hiring and firing, advancement, grievance, sexual harassment, and child abuse reporting. -All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor. -The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff, administrators and families.

Step 3:

- The program is evaluated yearly using a self assessment tool (Accreditation Guidelines, Head Start Standards, age appropriate environment rating scale, High Scope) and has a written improvement plan based upon findings of a comprehensive self-assessment designed to analyze all aspects of the program.
- Programs must offer staff a benefit package including, at minimum, 2 of the following: reduced child care rates for children of staff, tuition reimbursement, paid training, mileage reimbursement for training and education, health insurance, dental insurance, disability insurance, retirement plan, paid vacation, paid sick time, paid personal time, paid holidays.
- Programs must offer staff the opportunity to participate in the development and /or revision of program policies.

Step 4:

- Programs has a plan to implement a salary scale that is based on professional qualifications, length of employment, and performance evaluation.

Administration and management referred to within: N/A

Administration and management source of evidence: Documentation submitted; observation

Cultural/Linguistic Diversity (centers)

Indicators in this section refer to provisions for responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Cultural/Linguistic Diversity indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Cultural/linguistic diversity indicators included: No

Accreditation (centers)

Indicators described in this section refer to accreditation by a national accrediting body. Accreditation is a process in which programs demonstrate that they meet standards set forth by the accrediting body. The standards are determined by the accrediting body. There is not a common set of standards used for early childhood program accreditation. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) and the Council on Accreditation (COA) are commonly included accreditation systems used in QRSs for center-based programs.

Accreditation included: Yes

If yes, accreditation is:	One criterion in highest rating.
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Community Involvement (centers)

Indicators described in this section refer to the type or frequency of involvement in the community. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Community involvement indicators included:	Yes
Comments:	Step 4: The program must maintain current and accurate information about community resources by connecting with their local Resource Development Center 2 times per year.

Provisions for Children with Special Needs (centers)

Indicators described in this section refer to provisions for children with special needs and the extent to which programs meet standards for inclusion of children with disabilities or other limiting conditions. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Provisions for Children with Special Needs indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Indicators that specify provisions for children with special needs included:	No
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Indicators for Family Child Care Programs

This section describes the indicators used in a QRS to assess the quality of family child care programs. The indicators are divided into the following categories: licensing compliance, ratio and group size, health and safety, curriculum, environment, child assessment, staff qualifications, family partnership, administration and management, cultural/linguistic diversity, accreditation, community involvement and provisions for children with special needs. A QRS may not have indicators in one or more of these categories, and these category labels may not be used in their QRS.

Number of site-specific indicator categories:	N/A
Site-specific names of categories used in the QRS:	Quality for ME does not use categories for their indicators.

Licensing Compliance (family child care)

Licensing requirements frequently serve as a minimal set of provisions to ensure that care and education environments are safe, healthy and provide for children's basic needs. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Licensing compliance included:	Yes
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Licensing required for enrollment:	Yes
Licensing equivalent to the first level	Yes
Licensing compliance referred to within:	N/A
Source of evidence:	Licensing status verified through DHHS database, MACWIS. Licensing compliance verified by DHHS staff review of program's paper file.
Comments:	All licensed programs are eligible to be placed at Step 1 if they have been licensed for one year. They must have had no substantiated serious licensing violations within the last year (Step 2) or 3 years (Step 3).

Ratio (family child care)

Ratio and group size requirements are frequently established in state licensing regulations. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Ratio and group size indicators included:	No
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Health and Safety (family child care)

Provisions for health and safety are frequently established in state licensing regulations. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Health and safety indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Health and safety indicators included:	No
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Curriculum (family child care)

A curriculum is a written document that provides a plan for intentional activities and interactions in an early childhood program. Indicators described in this section refer to requirements for the use of particular curricula or to demonstration that certain features of curriculum are in place. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Curriculum indicators included:	Yes
Description:	<p>Steps 2 & 3: Programs must have a written method for curriculum planning that includes planning from children's interests and skills.</p> <p>Steps 3 & 4: The Early Childhood Learning guidelines (ECLG)</p>

	and/or Infant Toddler Learning Guidelines (ITLG) must be on site, available to staff, and referenced during curriculum planning.
Curriculum review process:	No
Approved curricula identified:	No
Curriculum referred to within:	N/A
Curriculum source of evidence:	Documentation

Environment (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to features of the classroom environment. Further details about Observational Measures included in the QRS are included in a section below. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Environment indicators included:	Yes
Environment Rating Scales (ERS) included:	No (See Comments)
Additional indicators related to the environment (e.g., activities, interactions, specific features)	Steps 2 & 3: The program must follow a daily schedule and the learning environment must support the interests of the children.
Environment referred to within:	N/A
Environment source of evidence:	Documentation Submitted
Comments:	Environment Rating Scale scores are used to validate the Steps, but not to rate individual programs. Quality for ME is collecting data from providers by type of setting and STEP level, and validating it using the Environment Rating Scales. Programs receive a report on the Environment Rating Scale score. However, none of the scores are connected to STEPS or standards of QRS.

Child Assessment (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to processes in place to assess, observe or monitor children's development on a regular basis. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Child assessment indicators included:	Yes
Description:	Step 3: Evidence is collected 3 times per year on children's development in the following areas: -Social/Emotional

-Cognitive
 -Physical (gross and fine motor) development
 -Communication

Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, photographs. This evidence is incorporated in curriculum planning.

For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development and for programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines which are used as a guide for planning.

Step 4:

Same as Step 3, but the frequency is 4 times per year.

Child assessment review process:	No
Approved child assessments identified:	No
Child assessment referred to within:	N/A
Child assessment source of evidence:	Documentation submitted; observation

Staff qualifications (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to specific educational or training requirements for staff. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Staff qualification indicators included:	Yes
Indicators for family child care providers include:	Education, training, and a level on the Maine Roads To Quality Direct Care Career Lattice
Family child care qualifications related to administration and management	No
Bachelors degree indicator for family child care provider:	Yes (As an option in the MRTQ Career lattice)
Description:	<p>Step 1:</p> <p>-All staff holds qualifications according to regulations for licensed programs. -100% of permanent/regular staff members are registered in MRTQ Registry.</p> <p>Step 2:</p> <p>-100% of direct service members who work with children are registered in MRTQ Registry. -Owner/Director is at Level 3 or above on the</p>

MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice.

-The assistant, unless a family member, has a written job description defining responsibilities. The provider offers an annual review of the assistant's job performance.

Step 3:

-Owner/Director is at level 4 or above on the MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice and holds a valid CDA or degree in ECE or a related degree, has a professional development plan prepared annually, 10 hours of professional growth activities per year above the regulatory minimum.

-Consistency of care: Children are not left with a substitute more than 20% of the time (such as 1 hour per every 5 hours, or 1 day per 5 day week, may be averaged over time)

Step 4:

-Provider has completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines, if serving children ages 3-5.

Staff qualifications referred to within:	N/A
Staff qualifications source of evidence	Documentation submitted

Family Partnership (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to activities and strategies to involve and engage families. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Family partnership indicators included:	Yes
Description:	<p>Step 2:</p> <p>-The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff, administrators, and families.</p> <p>-The provider gives written policies to parents: areas covered in written policies include substitute care arrangement, persons authorized to pick up child, illness, administering medication, emergencies, guidance and discipline, parent conferences and visits, if relevant, religious teaching and activities and if relevant, transportation and/or field trips.</p>

Step 3:

-The program has a written philosophy about the relationship between the parents and the program, which is shared with parents when their children are enrolled.

-The program makes families aware of local and state resources available to them. These resources may include: Resource Development Centers, Child Development Services, Maine Parent Federation, WIC, MaineCare, local community events, etc. Ways to inform parents of these resources may include: Parent resource library, bulletin boards, enrollment packets, etc.

-The provider gathers information about children’s interests and needs through observation and conversations with parents. This information is used to set goals that support the children’s development.

-Parents are offered at least 1 parent conference a year to discuss the child’s progress, behavior, social and physical needs.

-Parent Surveys are done annually. The survey tool must be approved by DHHS or the program may use the one provided by DHHS.

-Parents of infants and toddlers are provided with written daily communication about their child’s day.

Step 4:

Program has a documented plan to involve families and offer opportunities for individualized parent involvement. This can include:

- Volunteering (not-for-profit centers only)
- Sharing a meal with their child
- Talent show
- Circle time with a parent
- Barbeque
- Fundraiser

Family partnership referred to within:

N/A

Family partnership source of evidence:

Documentation submitted

Administration and Management (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to features of the administration and management of the program. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Administration and management indicators included:

Yes

Description:

Step 2:

- Programs (including FCC providers who employ staff) hold staff meetings on a monthly basis.
- Programs (including FCC providers who employ staff not related to them) have an employee handbook detailing policies for at least hiring and firing, advancement, grievance, sexual harassment, and child abuse reporting.
- The assistant, unless a family member, has a written job description defining responsibilities. The provider offers an annual review of the assistant’s job performance.
- The provider gives written policies to parents: areas covered in written policies include- substitute care arrangement, persons authorized to pick up child, illness, administering medication, emergencies, guidance and discipline, parent conferences and visits, if relevant, transportation and/or field trips.
- The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff and families.

Step 3:

- The program is evaluated yearly using a self-assessment tool and has a written improvement plan based upon findings of a comprehensive self-assessment designed to analyze all aspects of the program.
- The provider gathers information about children’s interests and needs through observation and conversations with parents. She uses this information to set goals that support the children’s development.
- Consistency of care- Children are not left with a substitute more than 20% of the time (such as 1 hour per every 5 hours, or 1 day per 5 day week, may be averaged over time)

Step 4:

- The assistant, unless a family member, is paid at least the minimum wage. If the assistant works more than 15 hours a week, the provider pays the employer’s share of social security and workers’ compensation.

Administration and management referred to within:

N/A

Administration and management source of evidence:

Documentation submitted

Cultural/Linguistic Diversity (family child care)

Indicators in this section refer to provisions for responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Cultural/Linguistic Diversity indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Cultural/linguistic diversity indicators included:	No
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Accreditation (family child care)

Indicators described in this section refer to accreditation by a national accrediting body. Accreditation is a process in which programs demonstrate that they meet standards set forth by the accrediting body. The standards are determined by the accrediting body. There is not a common set of standards used for early childhood program accreditation. Accreditation by the National Association of Family Child Care is a commonly included accreditation used in QRSs for family child care programs.

Accreditation included:	Yes
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If yes, accreditation is:	One criterion in highest rating.
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Community Involvement (family child care)

Indicators described in this section refer to the type or frequency of involvement in the community. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>.

Community involvement indicators included:	Yes
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Comments:	Steps 3 & 4: Programs must maintain current and accurate information about community resources by connecting with their local Resource Development Center two times per year.
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Provisions for Children with Special Needs (family child care)

Indicators described in this section refer to provisions for children with special needs and the extent to which programs meet standards for inclusion of children with disabilities or other limiting conditions. All QRS quality indicators described in this profile are beyond those required by licensing. Details on the licensing requirements for a specific state can be found at: <http://nrckids.org/STATES/states.htm>. Provisions for Children with Special Needs indicators are also included in the Environment Rating Scales which are used in some QRSs.

Indicators that specify provisions for children with special needs included:	No
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Application Process

Information in this section describes specific features of the application process in the QRS.

Requires self-assessment tool:	Yes
Describe self-assessment tool:	<p>All providers must self-evaluate their program against the standards at each step.</p> <p>Family Child Care: The program is evaluated yearly using a comprehensive self-assessment designed to analyze all aspects of the program. A written improvement plan is developed based upon findings from the self-assessment.</p> <p>Center-based: The program is evaluated yearly using a comprehensive self-assessment tool designed to analyze all aspects of the program (Accreditation Guidelines, Head Start Standards, age appropriate environment rating scale, High Scope) and has a written improvement plan based upon findings from this assessment.</p>
Availability of preparatory process:	Yes
Describe preparatory process:	<p>Providers can get assistance from resource and referral agencies, education specialist personnel funded by state Department of Health and Human Services, and from Maine Road to Quality.</p> <p>Providers apply using a web-based application. They go through the application on-line and are given a preliminary/temporary Step Rating. The Step rating is then is verified by the Department of Health and Human Services.</p>
Requires orientation:	No
Describe orientation:	There is an optional orientation session for providers.
Time from application to rating:	Typically 2-3 weeks
Can apply for particular rating:	Yes

Outreach

This section describes the strategies that a QRS uses to disseminate information to parents, providers/programs, and the public.

Outreach to parents:	No
Method of outreach to parents:	There is no statewide marketing plan to date for Quality for ME. There are plans to have a web site launched with a search tool for parents looking for providers. Information will be provided on Step level and staff qualifications for each specific center.
Outreach to providers:	Yes
Method of outreach to providers:	Website, written materials available through mailing and disseminated through QRS contractors/partners, information given to providers via QRS contractors/partners, and information is available in languages other than English.
Outreach to public:	No
Method of outreach to public:	Website is planned.
Percent of budget dedicated to marketing:	There is no budget dedicated to marketing.

Use of Observational Tools

The information in this section provides further detail about observational tools used in the QRS.

Observational tools used:	N/A. Environment Rating Scales are only used in the evaluation of Quality for ME. There are no observational tools linked to program ratings. However, programs do receive a report from their Environment Rating Scale visit.
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Improvement Process

This section provides information about the strategies used to provide or support quality improvement in the QRS.

Training available that is linked to QRS:	Yes
Content of linked training:	Training on Maine's Early Learning Guidelines
Total duration of training:	30 hours
Trainer approval process:	No
Target population for training:	All providers
Onsite assistance available that is linked to QRS:	Yes
Content of linked onsite assistance:	Varies

Onsite assistance frequency	Varies. The frequency of on-site assistance is unlimited.
Length of onsite sessions	Varies. The length of on-site assistance is unlimited.
Total duration of onsite assistance:	Varies. The total duration of onsite assistance is unlimited.
Formal approval for onsite assistance provider:	Yes
Target population for onsite assistance:	Higher quality levels
Comments about improvement process:	Maine uses the collaborative consultation model for on-site assistance. Only programs in the QRS at higher levels (Steps 3 & 4) are eligible for collaborative consultation. Lower level programs receive on-site visits and a site report. At level 3, programs receive a one-time site visit. At level 4, programs receive a site visit and an improvement plan and goals must be in place that the trainer and provider are working towards.

Financial Incentives

A variety of strategies may be used to provide financial incentives to providers to participate in the QRS or to support quality improvement efforts. This section provides information about different financial incentives.

Tiered reimbursement:	<p>There is a 10% quality subsidy reimbursement differential for each child whose care is subsidized by the Department of Health and Human Services- Early Childhood Division for programs that have reached Step 4.</p> <p>There is a 5% progress differential for each child whose care is subsidized for programs that have reached Step 3 and that have submitted program descriptions and are awaiting a scheduled visit from one of the accrediting bodies.</p> <p>There is a 2% increase for programs that have reached Step 2 .</p>
Quality award/bonus:	No
Startup award:	No
Scholarship (T.E.A.C.H)	Providers who are income eligible are eligible for scholarships to pursue early childhood education degrees. These scholarships are only available for QRS participants.
Wage enhancement	No
Retention bonus:	No
Improvement grants:	Programs that pay state taxes and have a Quality Improvement Plan may apply for a Child Care Investment Tax Credit for expenses made to

Comments on financial incentives:	improve quality. Parents of any child enrolled in programs at Step 4 level are eligible to receive a double child care tax credit on their state income tax. QRS enrolled providers are waived the registry fee for Maine and the accreditation process is subsidized.
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Administration Details

This section provides details about the QRS administration and funding.

QRS lead :	Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services
QRS lead type:	State government agency
Overall funding amount for most recent fiscal year:	Information not available
Overall funding sources:	Child Care Development Fund

Partners

This section provides information about the roles and responsibilities of partners in the QRS.

Partner 1 type :	University
Partner 1 name:	University of Maine at Orono University of Southern Maine
Partner 1 function:	Collect/validate information to assign the rating, conduct observational assessments, provide technical assistance and quality improvement services, provide system navigation support, and data collection.
Work plan in place:	Yes
Partner 2:	State agency
Partner 2 name:	Bureau of Taxation
Partner 2 function:	Quality for ME has a Memorandum Of Understanding for information sharing with the Bureau of Taxation
Work plan in place:	No
Partner 3 type :	State agency
Partner 3 name:	Department of Education
Partner 3 function:	Quality for ME shares training for pre-kindergarten with the Department of Education.
Work plan in place:	No

Partner 4 type :	Resource and Referral Agency
Partner 4 name:	Resource Development Centers (6 regionally based)
Partner 4 function:	Provide technical assistance and quality improvement services, provide system navigation support, and manage communication/information dissemination.
Work plan in place:	Yes

Linkage of QRS with Other Systems

This section provides information about how the QRS is linked with other systems/standards including child care subsidies, professional development, state early learning guidelines, and core knowledge /competencies for providers.

Child care subsidies:	Yes
Description:	Subsidy is linked to the tiered reimbursement incentives described above.
Professional development:	Yes
Description	Participants must be members of the Maine Road's Early Care and Education Career Development Registry prior to application. QRS providers participate in Maine's Road to Quality Direct Care Career Lattice and Registry.
Incorporation of other standards:	Yes
Description:	Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines Head Start Performance Standards Core Competencies

Evaluation

Status of evaluation:	Ongoing
List research questions for ongoing evaluation:	Data Capacity Grant questions (internal evaluation): Is there a difference between programs enrolled and those not enrolled in levels of quality, and the way they progress through levels of quality? Does the QRS system make a difference? For current year only: How is authentic assessment for infants and toddlers being met in

the highest quality (Step 4) programs?

The external evaluation has two components. In one, they are evaluating the implementation of the QRS state-wide. This evaluation essentially focuses on assessing the validity of the Step Levels by program type. The other component is a separate US DHHS funded project whereby there are randomly assigned programs followed over a period of time to learn more about the kinds of supports QRS sites are using to improve quality, etc. There is also an exploratory case study that is focused on understanding more about how providers are using assessments to improve program quality.

Evaluator type:	External and Internal
Evaluator name (if external)	University of Southern Maine University of Maine, Orono
If external, was RFP issued:	No
Published reports to date :	N/A

Key Contacts

Category :	Overall management
Contact name:	Michel Lahti, PhD Research Faculty
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Contact name:	Allyson Dean, Director Maine Roads to Quality
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Category :	Data systems, monitoring and evaluation
Contact name:	Alan Cobo-Lewis
Organization:	University of Maine, Orono

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Phone:

References

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND).

State of Maine Early Care and Education Quality Rating System (Quality for ME) Application Manual.

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

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND). Quality for ME Standards: Center Based Child Care Programs. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND). Quality for ME Standards: Family Child Care Programs. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND). Quality for ME Standards: Head Start Child Care Programs. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.

Early Childhood Division of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (ND). Quality for ME Standards: School Age Child Care Programs. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>.



Center Based Child Care Programs

STANDARDS

To Attain and Maintain Step One

To Attain and Maintain Step Two

To Attain and Maintain Step Three

To Attain and Maintain Step Four

Standards	Step 1 Program – Meets minimum licensing standards	Step 2 Program Meets Step 1 standards plus those listed below	Step 3 Program Step 2 standards plus those listed below	Step 4 Program Step 3 standards plus those listed below
Compliance History/ Licensing Status	1. Facility meets regulatory standards. 2. Facilities in operation for less than one year cannot apply to the Quality Rating System (QRS). <i>And</i>	1. Program is in compliance with licensing regulations. 2. The facility has no substantiated serious violations in the past year. <i>And</i>	1. Program is in compliance with licensing regulations. 2. The facility has no substantiated serious violations in the past three years. <i>And</i>	1. Program is in compliance with licensing regulations. 2. The facility has no substantiated serious violations in the past three years. <i>And</i>
Learning Environment/ Developmentally Appropriate Practice		3. The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children. The schedule provides time and support for transitions, includes both indoor and outdoor experiences and is responsive to the child's need to rest or be active (National Association for the Education of Young Children ((NAEYC)) criteria 2.A.07). 4. The program has a written method for curriculum planning that includes planning from children's interests and skills. 5. Each program site has 1 teacher or staff member responsible for educational programming has completed the training in Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. <i>And</i>	3. The ECLG and/or ITLG are on site, available to staff and are referenced during curriculum planning. 4. 50% of lead teachers (per program site) working with children ages 3-5 have completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. <i>And</i>	3. Each classroom with 3-5 year olds has a lead teacher who has completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. 4. Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines are consistently used to guide the development of an age appropriate curriculum for children ages 3-5. <i>And</i>
Program Evaluation		6. The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff, administrators and families. A written plan for improvement based on the reflective practice is kept in the portfolio and made available for on-site review. <i>And</i>	5. The program is evaluated yearly using a self assessment tool (Accreditation Guidelines, Head Start Standards, age appropriate environment rating scale, High Scope) and has a written improvement plan based upon findings of a comprehensive self-assessment designed to analyze all aspects of the program. <i>And</i>	5. Holds current NAEYC accreditation, is a Head Start Program with a Gold or Blue designation, or is accredited by the American Montessori Society. <i>And</i>
Staffing and Professional Development	3. 100% of staff members are registered in Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) Registry.	7. At least 50% of lead teachers are at a level 5 or above on the MRTQ Career Lattice. 8. Programs hold staff meetings on a monthly basis. <i>And</i>	4. At least 50% of staff members in direct care positions are at least a level 5 on MRTQ Career Lattice or meet NAEYC candidacy requirements and provide appropriate documentation verifying candidacy status. All staff have a professional development plan prepared annually and 10 hours of professional growth activities per year above the regulatory minimum. <i>And</i>	6. Director is at a level 5 or above on the MRTQ Administrative/Management Coordination Career Lattice OR at a level 6 or above on the MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice AND 50% of lead teachers are at level 6 or above on MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice. (Programs that meet NAEYC candidacy requirements may substitute verification of candidacy for the aforementioned professional development standard.) <i>And</i>
Administrative Policies and Procedures		9. Programs have an employee handbook detailing policies for at least the following: hiring and firing, advancement, grievance, sexual harassment, and child abuse reporting. (NAEYC 10.E.01) 10. All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor. (NAEYC 10.E.09) 11. The program has a handbook that includes the handbook requirements within licensing and the following policies and procedures around attendance, discipline, health and safety, field trips, and holidays. (NAEYC 10.B.08) <i>And</i>	5. Staff members (with curriculum planning responsibilities) are provided with at least 1 hour of time per week out of the setting for curriculum planning that directly relates to the development of age appropriate activities. 6. Programs that employ staff offer a benefit package including, at minimum, two of the following: reduced child care rates for children of staff, tuition reimbursement, paid training, mileage reimbursement for training and education, health insurance, dental insurance, disability insurance, retirement plan, paid vacation, paid sick time, paid personal time, paid holidays (NAEYC 10.E.06) 7. Programs that employ staff offer them the opportunity to participate in the development and /or revision of program policies. (ex. Policy review can be staff meeting agenda item) (NAEYC 10.F.04) <i>And</i>	7. Programs has a plan to implement a salary scale that is based on professional qualifications, length of employment, and performance evaluation. (NAEYC 10.E.01) <i>And</i>
Parent/Family Involvement		13. The program has a written philosophy about the relationship between the parents and the program, which is shared with parents when their children are enrolled. (NAEYC 10.A.1) <i>And</i>	8. Parents are offered at least 2 parent conferences a year to discuss the child's progress, behavior, social and physical needs. (NAEYC 7.B.01-06) 9. Parent Surveys are done annually. The survey tool must be approved by DHHS or the program may use the one provided by DHHS. (NAEYC 10.E.01) 10. Parents of infants and toddlers are provided with written daily communication about their child's day. (NAEYC 7.B.05) 11. Program has a parent advisory/involvement group and provides opportunities for parent involvement in the program that embody the written philosophy of parent-program relationship. (NAEYC 10.E.04) <i>And</i>	8. Program has a documented plan to involve families and offer opportunities for individualized parent involvement. This can include: • Volunteering (not-for-profit centers only) • Sharing a meal with their child • Talent show • Circle time with a parent • Barbeque • fundraiser (NAEYC 7.A.12-14) <i>And</i>
Family Resources		14. The program makes families aware of local and state resources available to them. These resources may include: Resource Development Centers, Child Development Services, Maine Parent Federation, WIC, MaineCare, local community events etc. Ways to inform parents of these resources may include: parent resource library, bulletin boards, enrollment packets etc. (NAEYC 8.A.01) <i>And</i>	12. Program maintains current and accurate information about community resources by connecting with their Resource Development Center. <i>And</i>	9. Same as previous step. <i>And</i>
Authentic Assessment		15. Evidence is collected 2 times per year on children's development in the following areas: • Social/Emotional • Cognitive • Physical (gross and fine motor) development • Communication Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, photographs. This evidence is incorporated in curriculum planning. For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development (ITLG) and for programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines (ECLG) which are used as a guide for planning.	13. Evidence is collected 3 times per year on children's development in the following areas: • Social/Emotional • Cognitive • Physical (gross and fine motor) development • Communication Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, photographs. This evidence is incorporated in curriculum planning. For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development and for programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines which are used as a guide for planning.	10. Evidence is collected 4 times per year on children's development in the following areas: • Social/Emotional • Cognitive • Physical (gross and fine motor) development • Communication Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, photographs. This evidence is incorporated in curriculum planning. For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development and for programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines which are used as a guide for planning.



Family Child Care Programs

STANDARDS

Standards	To Attain and Maintain Step One	To Attain and Maintain Step Two	To Attain and Maintain Step Three	To Attain and Maintain Step Four
Standards	Step 1 Program	Step 2 Program Meets Step 1 standards plus those listed below	Step 3 Program Step 2 standards plus those listed below	Step 4 Program Step 3 standards plus those listed below
Compliance History/ Licensing Status	1. Facility meets regulatory standards. 2. Facilities in operation for less than one year cannot be rated. <i>And</i>	1. Program is in compliance with licensing regulations. 2. The facility has no substantiated serious violations in the past year. <i>And</i>	1. Program is in compliance with licensing regulations. 2. The facility has no substantiated serious violations in the past three years. <i>And</i>	1. Program is in compliance with licensing regulations. 2. The facility has no substantiated serious violations in the past three years. <i>And</i>
Learning Environment/ Developmentally Appropriate Practice	3. The learning environment, materials, and daily schedule pass the assessment for regulatory licensing standards <i>And</i>	3. The program follows a daily schedule and the learning environment supports the interests of the children. (NAFCC 3.17) 4. The program has a written method for curriculum planning that includes planning from children's interests and skills. (NAFCC 3.6) <i>And</i>	3. The Infant Toddler Learning Guidelines and/or Early Childhood Learning Guidelines are on site, available to staff and are referenced during curriculum planning. <i>And</i>	3. Provider caring for children ages 3-5 has completed the training on implementing curriculum based on Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. 4. Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines are consistently used to guide the development of an age appropriate curriculum for children ages 3-5. <i>And</i>
Program Evaluation	4. The program is maintained through re-licensing and maintains regulatory standards. <i>And</i>	5. The program provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and is inclusive of staff and families. 6. FCC providers with staff will allow for discussion and feedback around the assessment. <i>And</i>	3. The program is evaluated yearly using a self assessment tool and has a written improvement plan based upon findings of a comprehensive self-assessment designed to analyze all aspects of the program. <i>And</i>	4. Holds current accreditation from National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC). <i>And</i>
Staffing and Professional Development	5. All staff holds qualifications according to regulations for licensed programs. 6. 100% of permanent/regular staff members are registered in MRTQ Registry. <i>And</i>	9. Owner/Director is at level 3 or above on the MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice. 10. Programs (including FCC providers who employ staff) hold staff meetings on a monthly basis. <i>And</i>	3. Owner/Director is at level 4 or above on the MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice, has a professional development plan prepared annually, 10 hours of professional growth activities per year above the regulatory minimum. <i>And</i>	5. Owner/Director is at a level 4 or above on MRTQ Direct Care Career Lattice and holds a valid CDA or college degree in ECE or related degree. <i>And</i>
Administrative Policies and Procedures	7. The program operates as required by regulations. <i>And</i>	11. Programs (including FCC providers who employ staff not related to them) have an employee handbook detailing policies for at least hiring and firing, advancement, grievance, sexual harassment, and child abuse reporting. 12. The assistant, unless a family member, has a written job description defining responsibilities. The provider offers an annual review of the assistant's job performance. (NAFCC 5.30) 13. The provider gives written policies to parents: areas covered in written policies include- substitute care arrangement, persons authorized to pick up child, illness, administering medication, emergencies, guidance and discipline, parent conferences and visits, if relevant, transportation and/or field trips. (NAFCC 5.19) <i>And</i>	4. The provider gathers information about children's interests and needs through observation and conversations with parents. She uses this information to set goals that support the children's development. (NAFCC 3.4) (NAFCC standards 3.5 and 3.6 also support this) 5. Consistency of care- Children are not left with a substitute more than 20% of the time (such as 1 hour per every 5 hours, or 1 day per 5 day week, may be averaged over time) (NAFCC 5.35) <i>And</i>	6. The assistant, unless a family member, is paid at least the minimum wage. If the assistant works more than 15 hours a week, the provider pays the employer's share of social security and workers' compensation. (NAFCC 5.31) <i>And</i>
Parent/Family Involvement	8. The program has handbooks and policies as required by regulations. 9. Communicates with parents as required by regulations. <i>And</i>	15. The program has a written philosophy about the relationship between the parents and the program, which is shared with parents when their children are enrolled. <i>And</i>	7. Parents are offered at least 1 parent conference a year to discuss the child's progress, behavior, social and physical needs. (NAFCC 1.16) 8. Parent Surveys are done annually. The survey tool must be approved by DHHS or the program may use the one provided by DHHS. 8. Parents of infants and toddlers are provided with written daily communication about their child's day. (NAFCC 1.14) <i>And</i>	7. Program has a documented plan to involve families and offer opportunities for individualized parent involvement. This can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing a meal with their child • Talent show • Circle time with a parent • Barbeque • fundraiser (NAFCC 1.19 and 1.27) <i>And</i>
Family Resources	N/A	16. The program makes families aware of local and state resources available to them. These resources may include: Resource Development Centers, Child Development Services, Maine Parent Federation, WIC, MaineCare, local community events etc.) Ways to inform parents of these resources may include: Parent resource library, bulletin boards, enrollment packets etc.) (NAFCC 5.12) <i>And</i>	9. Program maintains current and accurate information about community resources by connecting with their local Resource Development Center. <i>And</i>	Same as previous Step <i>And</i>
Authentic Assessment	10. The program meets the regulatory requirements for child observation which includes observation of children at arrival and throughout the day for obvious signs of illness.	17. Evidence is collected 2 times per year on children's development in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social/Emotional • Cognitive • Physical (gross and fine motor) development • Communication Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, photographs. This evidence is incorporated in curriculum planning. For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers-Guidelines for Learning and Development and for programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines which are used as a guide for planning <i>Observation is addressed in the Record Keeping section of the NAFCC standards (5.21-5.25), however it does not indicate a certain number of observations required annually.</i>	10. Evidence is collected 3 times per year on children's development in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social/Emotional • Cognitive • Physical (gross and fine motor) development • Communication Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, photographs. This evidence is incorporated in curriculum planning. For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development and for programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines which are used as a guide for planning	8. Evidence is collected 4 times per year on children's development in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social/Emotional • Cognitive • Physical (gross and fine motor) development • Communication Examples of evidence include children's work, observations, interviews with families, audio tape, video tape, photographs. This evidence is incorporated in curriculum planning. For programs serving infants and toddlers, the observations are linked to Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers- Guidelines for Learning and Development and for programs serving children 3-5 years, the observations are linked to Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines which are used as a guide for planning