Let’s Talk
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QRIS Policies, Processes and Procedures Guidance Materials

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Overview of Content

• Explore the topic of guidance manuals developed by states to document their QRIS policies, processes and procedures.

• Identify ways that good, comprehensive manuals improve participation rates and leads to improved access for families to higher quality programs.
Agenda

- Objectives of QRIS policy, process and procedure guidance manuals
- Benefits and Risks
- Communication
- Arizona’s Quality First
- Washington State’s Early Achievers
Presenters

Peggy Ball

Leslie Totten

Denise Mauzy

Rachael Brown-Kendall
QRIS Policy and Procedures Guidance Manuals – Why?

- Establishes the policies and procedures
- Creates a common understanding – Communicating policies and procedures to all participating programs and QRIS administrative staff
- Supports consistency in application of policies and procedures
- Documents QRIS work and creates historical record
- Creates a foundation to evaluate implementation efforts
Poll: Guidance on Participating in QRIS

*Does your state have comprehensive, written guidance for ECE programs to help them to participate in the QRIS?*

- Yes
- No
Poll: Guidance on Administering QRIS

Does your state have comprehensive guidance for individuals who administer QRIS to support accurate & consistent application of policies & procedures?

• Yes
• No
Poll: Content of Program and Policy Manuals

Which of the following content areas are included in your guidance manual?

• Agencies administering QRIS
• Programs eligible to participate
• Application and renewal process
• QRIS standards
• Evidence needed to meet standard
• Info. on program assessment tools
• Appeal process
• Financial incentives and supports
• Rationale supporting standards
• Other
Risk of not having QRIS program manuals
Risks of Not Having Comprehensive P&Ps

Staff/Implementing Partner Guidance

- Lack of clarity about key processes and expectations of QRIS staff
  - E.g., reliability of assessors can be impacted
- Different staff may give participants conflicting responses to questions
- Programs may be scored differently
- Increased levels of frustration by team members around “understood” policies and management response

Early Childhood Program Guidance

- Lack of clarity about key processes and expectations of program staff
  - Inability to fully participate in process
- Increased levels of frustration by program staff
- Increased numbers of appeals
- Eroding confidence in QRIS
  - May become very vocal within the EC community
- Decreasing levels of participation in QRIS (or compliance if mandated)
What Prompts Changes and Updates?

- New policies and procedures
- Changes in existing policies and procedures
- Clarification
3.8.2 Classroom Information and Staff Assignments
This information is used for the Program Content component and will be verified during the Program Overview.

3.8.2.1.1 Minimum Requirements for Submitting Classroom/Group Information
All classrooms/groups, including school-age classrooms, must be listed. At least one lead staff must be assigned to each classroom/group. The classroom/group information must reflect adherence to the group size limits for licensing.

3.8.2.1.1.3 Extended Leave Policy
If the lead staff member will be absent for more than 2 weeks, an alternate lead staff member must be identified. Some examples of extended leave are maternity or medical leave.
Example:
When Clarification in Procedure Was Needed

Procedures for Assessors Who Witness Child Abuse or Neglect

• Do not confront the adult/staff member involved.
• Immediately stop the observation.
• Notify the Director of the situation and that you will be making a call to the child abuse and neglect hotline and ask him/her to go to the classroom.
• Leave the program.
• Call and notify _________ of the situation immediately upon leaving the program.
• Report the case of abuse or neglect to the State.
• The hotline number is __________ and is included on the assessor’s observation paperwork and the ___________ contact list.
• Complete the ________Incident Report Form for Licensing or Child Abuse and Neglect. Email the Form to the ______________, within 24 hours of the incident.
Accessibility of Program Policy and Procedures/Communication

- All audiences, all information?
- Advantages for varying levels of transparency.
Access to/Communication about Program Policy and Procedures

- Transparency should support clarity for intended audiences
- Comprehensive P&Ps enable audience-specific guidance
- Training on P&Ps for different audiences
- Strategy for communicating changes
  - Established schedule for P&P revisions and releases
Examples of Technical Assistance in this Area

- Review of 3 state P&P Program Guidance Manuals
  - Partnered with the Quality Center and State Child Care Systems Network in one state review
- Supporting development of a “master set” policies and procedures for one state
  - Partnering with Quality Center and State Child Care Systems Network
- Considering development of a guidance document for comprehensive QRIS P&Ps, including lessons learned and state examples
POLICIES, PROCESSES & PROCEDURES
IN THE BEGINNING...

- 1 statewide implementation manual for ALL
- Included all components of the system
  - Coaching
  - Assessment
  - Incentives
  - Forms
  - Provider responsibilities
- Created confusion – who is our audience?
WHAT COMES NEXT...PULLING THINGS APART

• Created separate policy and procedure manuals for each component
• Assessment Operations Manual – focusing specifically on the assessment protocol
• Coaching Manual – focusing on the stages of consultation and coaches procedures in working with participants
SUPPORTING OUR PARTICIPANTS...

• Initiation of a Participant Guide

• Includes all components of Quality First

• Includes sections on how to be successful in Quality First

• Added a new section specific to participant responsibilities
LOGISTICS...

- All manuals updated annually – workgroup review
- Participant manuals distributed by coaches
- All documents live on the Quality First internal website – database for all QIRS information
- Quality First external website (QFAZ.com) has a link to the Participant Guide
- PGMS (Partner Grant Management System) is where all the grant contracts live with access to grantees
WHAT WE’VE LEARNED...

• Creating individual documents needs system focus in order to ensure understanding of all components

• Translation of materials is a CHALLENGE

• Documents can be used in supporting our programs on the waitlist to prepare in advance

• Manuals support ongoing questions when appeals or complaints are submitted
THANK YOU!

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Take action in support of Arizona’s young children.
Policy Manuals:

Early Achievers
Participant Operating Guidelines

September 1, 2014

Rachael Brown-Kendall
QRIS Administrator
Washington State Department of Early Learning
Overview

• Operating Guidelines
• Overview of the manual
• Focus: Appeals policy and process
Early Achievers as a Framework

All participating early learning programs use the same quality standards and policy manuals.

- Child Care Centers
- Family Child Care Homes
- ECEAP
- Head Start

Early Achievers Quality Standards
All early learning environments use same quality framework

High quality for all children
What’s in the guidelines?

I. Introduction
II. Early Achievers Partners: Roles within the System
III. Eligibility
IV. Early Achievers Quality Standards
V. Early Achievers Supports and Incentives
VI. Registering for Early Achievers
VII. Moving through Level 2: Entrance to Completion
VIII. Evaluation and Rating
IX. Participation Requirements and Expectations
X. Glossary of Terms
XI. Appendix—the Early Achievers Quality Standards
DEL’s Ratings Appeal Process

i. Overview

ii. Eligibility

iii. Purpose of rating appeal process

iv. Criteria for appeal

v. How to initiate rating appeal

vi. DEL’s rating appeal resolution process
Eligibility for a rating appeal

– Only ratings received after July 1, 2012 can be appealed
– Facilities may pursue one rating appeal per Early Achievers rating cycle
Purpose of Ratings Appeals Process

Facilities may pursue a rating appeal for the following:

• Facility suspects errors in calculations of points or other technical errors

• Facility claims that their practice at the time of on-site evaluation should have earned at least one Level higher (e.g., from Level 3 to Level 4) based on the Early Achievers Quality Standards

Appeals process does NOT address the following:

• New evidence

• Any concerns about the on-site evaluation that were not addressed in the post-visit survey
Criteria for appeal

• Must demonstrate that a successful appeal would result in a rating increase of at least one rating level, e.g., an increase from Level 3 to Level 4.

• Facilities may not appeal ratings based on the following (abbreviated list):
  – Additional information gathered by facility after on-site evaluation visits
  – Self-Assessment scores were higher than official assessment scores
  – ERS and CLASS scores from past assessments were higher than Early Achievers evaluation scores
Process to initiate a rating appeal

- An appeal must be submitted by the 30th calendar day following the rating release
- Step 1, provider communicates concern with Regional Coordinator
- Step 2, the facility provides a description of why the facility practice at the time of evaluation should have earned at least one Level higher based on Early Achievers Quality Rating and Improvement System Standards components (e.g., from Level 3 to Level 4)
- Step 3, submit the evidence to DEL
DEL’s Rating appeal resolution process

• QRIS Administrator reviews appeal
• Respond to provider
• Provider respond to QRIS Administrator if there is disagreement
• QRIS Administrator present summary of initial response of appeal to the Assistant Director for review
• Final decision communicated
If an appeal is granted

- Error in calculation
- Issue with data collection

Note: In case of re-rating due to founded rating appeal, no new facility documentation or evidence that was not available during original on-site visits will be reviewed.
If appeal request is denied

- Facility will be notified in writing of decision including information about why the appeal was denied. Facility rating will remain valid for three years from the date rating was issued.

NOTE: While a facility is in process of rating appeal:

- All Early Achievers services including coaching and distribution of Quality Improvement Awards will be put on hold until final rating appeal decision.
Questions?

Thank you!

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Our Operating Guidelines and a collection of support documents can be accessed on our website at: www.del.wa.gov/care/qris
Resource

QRIS Resource Guide

National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement, A Service of the Office of Child Care

Questions, Reflections, Comments
For More Information

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