

Mandatory Participation in TQRIS

This resource was prepared for a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) State in response to a request for information about which RTT-ELC States require some types of early childhood education programs to participate in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS)¹. This information will be helpful to other States when they periodically re-examine their TQRIS and as they move toward incorporating the new Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) regulations in their licensing and TQRIS requirements.

To address this request, ELCTA reviewed data from the [2015 RTT-ELC Annual Performance Reports](#) that the 20 RTT-ELC States submitted to the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services in the spring of 2016, individual [State TQRIS web pages](#), and the [QRIS Compendium](#).

Programs Included in the TQRIS

Depending on the individual State, programs participating in the TQRIS can include licensed or regulated child care centers, licensed or regulated family child care homes, child care programs participating in the child care subsidy program, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, State-funded PreK programs, school-age programs, and programs for children with disabilities.

Programs Required to Participate in the TQRIS

A key element of the RTT-ELC grant is promoting participation in the State’s TQRIS. In some States, participation has been mandated by recent legislation, and in other States it has been defined by administrative rules. States differ in whether they have made participation in the TQRIS voluntary for all programs, required for all programs that are licensed by the State, required for all early education programs that receive public funding, or required for all programs that receive CCDF (subsidy) funding.

- In nine RTT-ELC States (**California, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Vermont**) participation in the TQRIS is voluntary.
 - Although participation is voluntary in **Delaware**, 100 percent of the 11 State funded preschool programs (Early Childhood Assistance Program) programs and 100 percent of the 31 Head Start/Early Head Start programs participate in the TQRIS.

¹ For the RTT-ELC grant, a QRIS is referred to as a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). This distinction highlights the importance of common standards and levels across all types of publicly funded early learning and development systems statewide and meaningful differences among the quality levels of a system.

- In **Kentucky**, participation is currently voluntary; however, with the passage of House Bill 234, any program that receives public funding will be required to participate in the TQRIS once the revised TQRIS, Kentucky AllSTARS, has been fully implemented.
- In **Michigan**, participation is voluntary. All licensed and registered programs and providers have a program profile on Great Start to Quality. Programs that choose not to participate in rating process appear as an Empty Star. Programs participating in the rating process obtain a published rating on a scale of one to five stars.
- In four RTT-ELC States (**Colorado, Illinois, North Carolina, and Oregon**), all licensed programs are assigned to the first level of the TQRIS until they meet additional requirements. There are no requirements that programs be rated beyond the licensing requirement of the first level.
- **Ohio** requires all publicly funded programs to participate in the TQRIS. **Kentucky** will have the same requirement once the revised TQRIS is implemented.
- Five RTT-ELC States (**Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin**) require programs participating in the child care subsidy program to participate in TQRIS.

References

2015 Annual Performance Report data submitted to the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services in the spring of 2016. Individual State APRs are available at <https://elc.grads360.org/#program/annual-performance-reports>

QRIS Compendium - A Catalog and Comparison of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). Updated 2016. <http://qriscompendium.org/>

QRIS Resource Guide: Section 2- Initial Design Process. National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement. 2015. https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/files/chapters/QRISRG_Chapter_2_Design_Process.pdf

Individual State web pages:

| State | QRIS name | Website |
|-------|--|--|
| CA | California Quality Rating and Improvement System | http://www.cfc.ca.gov/programs/programs_ca_qris.html http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/ |
| CO | Colorado Shines | http://coloradoshines.force.com/ColoradoShines |
| DE | Delaware Stars for Early Success | http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu |
| GA | Quality Rated | http://qualityrated.org/ |
| IL | ExceleRate Illinois | http://www.exceleRateillinois.com/ (for parents) http://www.exceleRateillinoisproviders.com (for providers) |

Mandatory Participation in TQRIS

| State | QRIS name | Website |
|-------|---|---|
| KY | STARS for KIDS NOW | http://chfs.ky.gov/dcb/dcc/stars/default.htm |
| MA | Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (MA QRIS) | http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/provider-and-program-administration/quality-rating-and-improvement-system-qris.html |
| MD | Maryland EXCELS | http://www.marylandexcels.org |
| MI | Great Start to Quality | http://www.GreatStartToQuality.org/ |
| MN | Parent Aware | http://parentaware.org/ |
| NC | Star Rated License System | http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/general/home.asp |
| NJ | New Jersey Grow NJ Kids | http://www.grownjkids.com/ |
| NM | FOCUS | https://www.newmexicokids.org/focus/ |
| OH | Step Up To Quality | http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/sutq.php |
| OR | Oregon QRIS | http://triwou.org/projects/qris |
| PA | Pennsylvania Keystone STARS | http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS |
| RI | BrightStars | http://www.brightstars.org/providers/brightstars-quality-rating/ |
| VT | STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) | http://dcf.vermont.gov/childcare/providers/stars |
| WA | Early Achievers | http://del.wa.gov/care/qris/ |
| WI | YoungStar | http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/ |

This resource was developed as part of the Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance (ELC TA) Program through a contract from the U.S. Department of Education, run in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. The findings, conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. ELC TA is administered by AEM Corporation. For more information, visit www.elcta.org.