BRIEF

Practices for Promoting Young Children's Learning in QRIS Standards

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N C C P

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Introduction

Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS) have emerged as a central strategy in states' efforts to improve the quality of early care and education programs and the capacity of these programs to promote positive outcomes for children. Currently, 23 states have a statewide QRIS.[1] At the heart of each QRIS is a set of standards that describe the requirements a center-based program or home-based early care and education setting must meet in order to qualify for a QRIS rating. Because children's school readiness is a key goal of QRIS, requirements concerning practices that can promote children's learning and development are of special interest. These requirements are typically found in standards' descriptions of acceptable curricula or learning activities, including methods for promoting the learning of children with special needs and children who are English language learners, as well as practices related to child assessment and parent involvement.

A recent analysis found that about half of statewide QRIS refer to the state's Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs), most often in standards that require staff training in how to implement ELGs or the use of a curriculum or learning activities aligned with ELGs.[2] This brief provides a further examination of the strength of supports for children's early learning in QRIS standards. An analysis of QRIS standards in 23 states, and ELGs in a subset of these states, addressed the following questions:

- How many states have QRIS standards that describe specific practices for promoting children's early learning beyond statements that reference ELGs? What types of practices aimed at promoting children's learning are described in QRIS standards?

- When standards that describe specific practices for promoting children's learning are found, at what level in the QRIS do these first appear? (This question applies only to block systems in which a program must meet all requirements at one level of the QRIS before advancing to the next level.)

- In states with QRIS standards that require an alignment with the state's ELGs, do the ELGs describe practices that support children's early learning in key areas such as supports for children who are English language learners and parent involvement?

While QRIS' requirements that programs align their curricula and other activities with ELGs provide a practical way to reference important elements of early care and education quality, some states include descriptions of early-learning focused practices within their standards. One example from a state profiled in this report is a QRIS standard requiring that children participate in daily shared book reading, including sessions involving individual child-teacher interactions. A potential benefit of specifying certain practices in QRIS standards is that these practices may gain prominence in both the process of assessing the program in order to assign a quality rating and in quality improvement efforts designed to help a program attain a higher rating.

While a particular practice, such as daily interactive book reading, might be embedded in a state's Early Learning Guidelines, practitioners and technical assistance providers may not be fully aware of the detailed contents of lengthy ELG documents.

In a recent study, a significant number of QRIS technical assistance providers indicated that they do not frequently focus on helping teachers improve practices that support children's learning in such key areas as oral language, social-emotional growth, and early mathematics; similarly, they did not frequently focus on helping teachers support parents' involvement in their child's learning or on individualizing learning supports for children based on progress monitoring.[3] As discussed later, research showing that certain practices have a strong impact on positive early learning outcomes could be used to identify a limited number to specify in QRIS standards (see sources of information about research-based practices, page 12).

To preview findings from the analysis, QRIS standards that describe specific practices for promoting children's learning are the exception rather than the rule across current state-wide systems. However, the examples that exist suggest possible directions for other states, and can inform ongoing discussion of how best to formulate QRIS standards. This brief is organized by the following sections:

- A description of methods used in the analysis
- Results from the analysis that include:
  - an overview of early learning content in QRIS curriculum requirements;
  - a list of states with QRIS standards that describe specific practices for promoting children's learning (states are listed for each of eight areas of practice examined in the analysis);
  - examples from states with QRIS standards that describe specific practices for promoting children's learning;
  - a list of states with QRIS standards that reference the state's ELGs and also have ELGs that address a key area, such as parent involvement;
  - information about the levels of QRIS where specific practices and ELG alignment requirements are typically found.
- Summary and recommendations

Methods Used in the Analysis

The authors obtained QRIS standards for 23 states with statewide systems from state websites and from state QRIS profiles created by the Child Care Quality Rating System Assessment Project.[4] For each state, standards were examined across several sections typically labeled curriculum, learning activities, parent engagement, and child assessment. Sections on staff training and qualifications were also reviewed for training requirements relevant to particular topics such as training on practices that support the learning of English language learners.

In order to identify states with standards that describe specific practices for promoting children's learning, the authors developed definitions of "practices" for the following eight areas: supports for **language**, **early literacy**, **early math**, and **social-emotional** learning; **monitoring children's progress and individualizing learning supports; early learning-focused parent involvement;** and early learning supports for **children with special needs** and **English language learners**. The definitions, shown in the following sections for each area, reflect the types of research-based practices that are typically found in states' Early Learning Guidelines and other sources of information about research-informed practices (see research-to-practice resources, page 12). For each of these eight areas, standards were coded as "yes" when content in the standards met or approximated the definition. The results show the states, in each area, that include a description of specific practices in their QRIS standards, beyond a reference to the state's ELGs.

Additional analysis was conducted to identify states that require learning supports in the eight areas by referencing the state's ELGs. For states with QRIS standards that reference the state's Early Learning Guidelines, the content of the ELGs was examined and coded "yes" when practices to promote children's learning in each of the eight areas were found in the ELGs. The results show states that both require alignment with ELGs *and* have ELGs that include supports for children's learning in each area such as language or parent involvement.

The authors sent the definitions and coding for center-based and home-based standards to each state's QRIS administrator who was asked to verify the findings. Administrators found most of the coding to be correct, although clarification of the definitions used in the analysis was sometimes necessary. A few states reported that they were currently revising their QRIS standards. In cases where new standards were available, we coded these, and rechecked the accuracy with the state. The findings reported here apply to standards for both center-based and home-based settings, unless otherwise indicated.

Overview of Curriculum Requirements in QRIS Standards

In eight of the 23 states, QRIS standards require curricula that include specific practices such as learning activities designed to promote language, literacy, and social-emotional growth. These requirements are explicitly stated in the standards, which may or may not refer to ELGs. Five states indicate that a "written curriculum" is required, but do not specify required early learning content. Ten states do not include curriculum requirements in their standards. Findings about requirements related to specific domains are reported next.

Spotlight on Maryland: Curriculum[5]

Maryland is currently recruiting programs to field test the state's new QRIS standards. *Maryland EXCELS'* standards will establish five levels of quality for centers and family child care programs. The new standards will be implemented statewide in 2013.

Beginning at level three, programs must demonstrate use of a curriculum that provides multiple activities in several areas including language, literacy, and numeracy. At level four, the standards specify that these activities must be provided on *a daily basis*. In addition, at level four, programs must regularly update materials in the library and activity areas. At levels two through five, programs are required to provide at least 15 minutes per half-day of "literacy/reading opportunities."

The state uses a written description of the program's curriculum planning process and lessons plans to provide evidence of meeting these requirements.

Supports for Children's Oral Language, Literacy, Math, and Social-emotional Development

This set of results shows: 1) states that describe specific practices for promoting children's learning in the areas of oral language, early math, early literacy and social emotional development and 2) states that both reference ELGs *and* have ELGs that specify supports for each area. See box for definitions of practices in these areas.

> **Oral Language Development:** Teachers use a range of strategies and activities to promote children's oral language, including small group interactive read aloud and activities that help children expand their vocabulary.
>
> **Early Literacy:** Teachers help children gain knowledge of letters and literacy skills such as the sounds in words.
>
> **Early Math:** Teachers help children gain early math concepts, such as parts and wholes, and skill in using mathematics language.
>
> **Social Emotional:** Teachers support children's social emotional growth with a range of strategies and activities that help children develop skills in getting along with peers and managing negative emotions.

Oral Language

- Two states (IN, MA) describe specific practices.[6]
- Twelve states (DE, IN, LA, MA, ME, MS, NH, NM,[7] OH, PA, RI, WI) reference ELGs.

Early Literacy

- Two states (IN, MA) describe specific practices.
- Twelve states (DE, IN, LA, MA, ME, MS, NH, NM, OH, PA, RI, WI) reference ELGs.

Early Math

- One state (IN) describes specific practices.
- Twelve states (DE, IN, LA, MA,[8] ME, MS, NH,NM, OH, PA, RI, WI) reference ELGs.

Social Emotional Development

- Four states (IN, NM, MA, WI) describe specific practices.
- Twelve states (DE, IN, LA, MA, ME, MS, NH, NM, OH, PA, RI, WI) reference ELGs.

Both New Mexico and Indiana specify a variety of requirements for supporting children's social-emotional development in their QRIS standards.

AIM HIGH, New Mexico's five-level QRIS, highlights several aspects of children's social-emotional learning. Beginning at the two-star level, classrooms and home-based settings must have a positive social climate where staff, caregivers and children spend time talking and interacting with one another in conversation during the day as well as at mealtimes and other scheduled activities. Teachers should use various methods to communicate with nonverbal or language-delayed children, and caregivers should try to establish a positive, caring relationship with every child. During regular routines and activities, teachers should respond promptly and consistently to children's needs and interests.

Programs are also required to help children engage in positive interactions with each other. Teachers should coach children to help them interact positively with other children of various abilities. In addition, programs should promote children's growing independence and initiative by giving them many opportunities to make decisions, choose their own activities, and take charge of their own learning.

Beginning at level two, Indiana's four-level *Paths to Quality* includes indicators that focus on children's social-emotional growth. For preschoolers, programs must help children use problem-solving approaches to resolving conflict that include acknowledging feelings, listening to children share what happened, and asking for ideas or solutions. Special indicators for infant and toddler care require that teachers "give toddlers simple words to use to express feelings" and encourage verbal toddlers "to use words in conflict situations."

Monitoring Children's Learning and Using Results to Provide Individualized Learning Supports

The next set of results shows: 1) states that describe specific practices related to monitoring children's early learning and using results to provide individualized learning supports (see box for definition), and 2) states that both reference ELGs *and* have ELGs that specify practices in this area. The definition used here is more stringent than one used in a recent analysis, which found that 17 of 25 states require programs to use child assessment results to "individualize the curriculum *or* target program improvement."[11] Given this brief's focus on children's early learning, and the growing evidence that individualized learning supports can help at-risk learners, the definition used here focuses solely on monitoring children's learning in order to strengthen individualized supports for children's learning.[12]

> **Monitor/Individualize Support:** The program uses systematic methods for monitoring children's learning and uses the results to individualize the curriculum and provide extra learning supports to children who need them.

Monitoring and Individualizing Supports for Learning

- Eight states (DE, IN, MA, ME, NM, OH,[13] PA, WI) describe specific practices.
- Five states (LA, ME, MA, MS, OH) reference ELGs.

Parent Involvement

The next set of results shows: 1) states that describe specific practices related to parent involvement (see box for definition) and 2) states that both reference ELGs *and* have ELGs that specify practices in this area. The analysis used a definition that highlights programs' strategies for helping parents promote children's early learning. While standards in many states include parent engagement indicators, these standards do not typically convey a clear requirement that programs offer guidance to parents about how they can help their child learn.

> **Parent Involvement:** The program uses regular communication with parents to help provide guidance about how parents can promote their child's learning.

- Two states (CO, RI) describe specific practices.
- Five states (LA, MD, MS, OH, PA) reference ELGs.

Children with Special Needs and English Language Learners

This set of results shows: 1) states that describe specific practices related to promoting the learning of children with special needs and children who are English language learners (see box for definitions) and 2) states that reference ELGs *and* have ELGs that specify practices in these areas.

> **Children with Special Needs:** The program provides appropriate learning supports for children with special needs and includes them in classroom activities with typically developing peers.
>
> **English Language Learners:** The program uses English language learning strategies, such as describing children's actions, and also helps children maintain and develop their home language.

Children with Special Needs

- Five states (ID, IN, NH, PA, WI) describe specific practices.
- Four states (IN, LA, MA, ME) reference ELGs.

English Language Learners

- One state (MA) describes specific practices.
- One state (ME) references ELGs.

At what levels do QRIS standards include specific early-learning focused requirements?

The final set of findings shows where states that set different requirements across levels begin to require specific early learning supports. Among these states, supports for early learning typically begin to appear at mid-level. (Mid-level is defined here as level two in a three-level QRIS; levels two and three in a four-level QRIS, and level three in a five-level QRIS.) Across categories and states, the analysis identified 25 instances of states with QRIS that have descriptions of specific practices in one of the eight areas. Among those, three (12 percent) began at the first level of the QRIS while 16 (64 percent) occurred at mid-level; three (12 percent) appeared only at the highest level. The remaining instances occurred in states with point systems, and thus cannot be categorized by levels.

The analysis identified 63 instances, across categories and states, in which alignment with early learning guidelines was required, and the ELGs included practices for the specific content area. Most of these (54 percent) are first included at mid-level of the QRIS standards while only two (three percent) were found in the first level; 10 (16 percent) were not included until the highest level. The remaining instances occurred in states with point systems, and thus cannot be categorized by levels.

Spotlight on Idaho: Children with Special Needs[16]

Idaho's QRIS, *Idaho STARS*, has a separate "Inclusion Standard" which awards points to programs that meet certain requirements for ensuring the participation and learning of children with special needs. The most points are earned by programs in which 100 percent of children have their developmental growth tracked; the director documents training in serving children with special needs; and the program follows a plan for tracking referrals to outside services, including Child Find, and following up with families about referrals.

Both the administrator and lead teacher or caregiver must submit a plan for improving supports for children with special needs. Staff must first complete an online self-assessment, The Early Childhood Inclusion Self-Reflection survey. This tool helps staff assess their current use of best practices that support children's active participation in activities and learning experiences; determine children's strengths, interests and needs; and support families' involvement in the child's development. Plans for enhancing supports for children with special needs are based on results of this assessment.

Spotlight on Massachusetts: English Language Learners[17]

Massachusetts' four-level QRIS specifies supports for English language learners beginning at level two for both centers and homes. In the standards' section on *Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity,* beginning at level two, classroom materials must "reflect the language and culture of the children in the classroom, their communities, and represent the diversity of society." Beginning at level three, the standards require that teaching staff have received training in how to work with children "from diverse home languages and cultures" and in second language acquisition. Also at level three, teaching staff must have language and literacy skills that provide a model for children in English or the child's home language.

Under the "Family and Community Engagement" section at level two, informational materials regarding the program must be available in the language of the community. In addition, at level three for centers and four for homes, families are encouraged to come into the classroom and share cultural and language traditions. At level three in centers, the program provides translators when necessary for meetings and workshops to encourage meaningful communication between the program and families. At level four in centers, the program "provides or connects families to education, training and support programs (such as family literacy, adult education, job training, child development, parenting, English as a second language, etc.)"

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings

This brief examines practices for promoting young children's learning in the standards of Quality Rating Improvement Systems. Key findings are summarized below.

- **Only a few states provide descriptions of specific practices for promoting children's early learning in their QRIS standards.** Those that do include descriptions of practices that support children's learning in the areas of language, literacy, social-emotional, and math. The analysis also identified examples of practices related to early learning-focused parent involvement, using monitoring results to support the learning of individual children, and practices for promoting learning among children with special needs and English language learners. Across areas, specific supports included in QRIS standards were most detailed for language, literacy, and social-emotional domains.

- **About half the states incorporate supports for key areas of early learning into their standards by referencing the state's ELGs, most often by requiring staff training in ELGS and alignment between the ELGs and programs' curricula and learning activities.** Alignment with ELGs, where ELGs require learning supports in a particular domain, is less common (under a quarter of states) in the areas of monitoring and individualizing supports; parent involvement; children with special needs; and English language learners. In some instances, standards require curricula alignment with ELGs, but the ELGs provide only a very brief, general reference to the domain or no reference at all, and therefore were not counted.

- **In states with QRIS that set requirements at different levels (block systems), most specific early learning supports and requirements for standards' alignment with ELGs were not included until mid-level.** A notable number (15 percent) of ELG requirements were found only at the highest level of the QRIS.

Recommendations

The early learning experiences provided by teachers, caregivers, and parents provide direct and potentially strong impacts on young children's school readiness and later school success. State leaders involved in developing and refining Quality Rating Improvement Systems may wish to focus special attention on the early learning-focused requirements in their QRIS standards, especially in the areas of curriculum and learning activities that can support children's language, literacy, early math, and social-emotional growth; monitoring and individualizing learning supports; parent involvement; and supporting the early learning of children with special needs and English language learners. The following recommendations suggest options for strengthening these requirements.

- **Specify key practices that strongly support children's early learning within QRIS standards.** In addition to referencing Early Learning Guidelines, states should consider describing key practices related to effective teaching and caregiving, the curriculum, the use of child progress monitoring to individualize learning supports, and parent involvement within their standards. The choice of particular practices to specify in standards can be guided by research that identifies certain practices as having strong, positive impacts on children's school readiness and later school success. (See page 12 for sources of information about research-informed practices that support young children's learning in the eight areas examined in this brief.)

- **Incorporate key practices that strongly support children's early learning within the lowest (entry) levels of QRIS standards.** States should consider including selected practices at the lowest levels of the QRIS standards. Certain practices that are known to support foundational competencies, such as language and social-emotional skills, might be considered so fundamental to children's well-being and development that they qualify as indicators for *all* programs participating in the QRIS, beginning at the first level. Similarly, states with point systems could encourage key practices by granting them a

relatively significant allotment of points.

- **Examine state Early Learning Guidelines for gaps in addressing the key domains.** States with QRIS standards that reference Early Learning Guidelines should determine whether their ELGs fully address key domains or show gaps in particular areas (for example, a lack of explicit guidelines for progress monitoring and using results to individualize supports for each child's learning); gaps could be addressed with specific requirements within QRIS standards as well as enhancement of the ELGs.

- **Develop new methods programs can use to provide evidence that they are meeting QRIS requirements focused on early learning practices.** Further work is needed to determine what kinds of evidence can effectively capture best practices, especially in areas, such as high quality math or literacy teaching, that are not fully addressed in widely used classroom assessments. A valuable resource for this effort is the *Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education Settings: A Compendium of Measures, Second Edition* which offers information about a wide range of quality assessment instruments for center-based and home-based early care and education settings.[18] Although many of the instruments have not been fully tested for reliability and validity, they may provide a starting place for states wishing to further develop and evaluate new tools. Another type of evidence states could further develop would be participation in different types of training, such as the requirement in Massachusetts' QRIS that teachers receive training in how to work with children who are English language learners. In order for training requirements to serve as valid indicators of early learning supports, states would need to establish that a certain type and amount of training is related to actual "best practice" in the early care and education setting.

In sum, states' efforts to refine early-learning focused requirements in their QRIS standards will require attention to both the standards and to meaningful evidence for meeting these standards. While challenging, these efforts have the potential to enhance the quality of early care and education settings along dimensions that matter most to children's school readiness.

Research-to-Practice Resources

Language and Literacy

Neuman, S. B; Dickinson, D. K. (2010). *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 3). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing early literacy: Report of the national early literacy panel.* National Center for Family Literacy.

Vukelich, C.; Christie, J.; Enz, B. (2012). *Helping young children learn language and literacy: Birth through kindergarten, Third Edition.* Allyn & Bacon.

Phillips, B. M; Clancy-Menchetti, J; Lonigan, C. J. (2008). Successful phonological awareness instruction with preschool children: Lessons from the classroom. *Topics in early childhood special education* 28(1): 3-17.

Mathematics

Committee on Early Childhood Mathematics; Council, National Research. (2009). *Mathematics learning in early childhood:Paths toward excellence and equity.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Ginsberg, H.; Hyson, M.; Woods, T. (Forthcoming 2013). *Helping early childhood educators to teach math.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Copley, J. V. (2010). *The young child and mathematics, Second Edition.* Washington, DC; Reston, VA: National Association for the Education of Young Children; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Social-emotional Development

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/about/staff.html.

Riley, D.; San Juan, R. R.; Klinkner, J.; Ramminger, A. (2008). *Social and Emotional development: Connecting science and practice in early childhood settings.* St. Paul, MN: RedLeaf Press.

Hyson, M. (2008). *Enthusiastic and engaged learners: Approaches to learning in the early childhood classroom.* New York: Teachers College Press and Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Child Progress Monitoring and Individualized Supports

Center for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood. www.crtiec.org.

Response and Recognition. Pathways to school success for young children. http://www.recognitionandresponse.org.

Greenwood, C. R; Bradfield, T; Kaminski, R; Linas, M. W.; Carta, J. J.; Nylander, D. (2011). The Response to intervention (RTI) approach in early childhood. *Focus on Exceptional Children* 43(9): 1-22.

Children with Special Needs

Cate, D.; Diefendorf, M.; McCullough, K.; Peters, M.; Whaley, K. (2010). *Quality indicators of inclusive early childhood programs/practices: A compilation of selected resources.* The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC).

English Language Learners

August, D.; Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: A report of the national literacy panel on language-minority children and youth.* Mahwah, NJ: Routledge.

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections. (2009). *Young dual language learners: A key topic resource list.* New York: Child Care & Early Education Research Connections. www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/16126/pdf.

Castro, D. C. (2011). High quality early education for young dual language learners: What can be done? *NHSA: Dialog Briefs* 14(2): 1-7.

Endnotes

1. The reported number of states with statewide QRIS varies across sources. The number used for this analysis is based on the authors' ability to confirm an active, statewide QRIS through communication with a state child care or QRIS administrator.

2. National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement. (2011). Early learning guidelines in QRIS standards. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/resource/wwwroot/files/QRIS_ELG.pdf.

3. Smith, S.; Robbins, T.; Schneider, W.; Kreader, J. L.; Ong, C. (2012). *Coaching and quality assistance in quality rating improvement systems: Approaches used by TA providers to improve quality in early care and education programs and home-based settings.* National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Accessed on September 4, 2012 from http://nccp.org/publications/pub_1047.html.

4. Child Care Quality Rating System (QRS) Assessment Project, 2008-2011. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed on July 11, 2011 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_quality/.

5. L. Budd, personal communication, July 18, 2012. Maryland Excels: Check for Excellence.

6. Most states have separate standards for center-based and home-based programs (except for Louisiana and Mississippi, which do not have separate standards for home-based care). Though separate, the two sets of standards are typically identical, with occasional differences. All information presented on content refers to both sets of standards for the given state, unless otherwise noted.

7. New Mexico is currently phasing out the AIM HIGH system in favor of new QRIS standards, New Mexico FOCUS, which are being implemented in 2012. This brief references the new standards.

8. In standards for centers in Massachusetts, there is alignment with state ELGs for early math content; in the state's home-based standards, there is no explicit content or alignment with ELGs.

9. Indiana Paths to Quality. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://www.childcareindiana.org/childcareindiana/ptq.cfm.

10. Ibid.

D. Haggard, personal communication, Nov. 11, 2011. New Mexico FOCUS.

11. National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement. (2011). State program quality standards about child assessment. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://www.qrisnetwork.org/sites/all/files/resources/gscobb/2012-03-19%2013%3A32/Report.pdf.

12. Greenwood, C. R.; Bradfield, T.; Kaminski, R.; Linas, M.; Carta, J. J.; Nylander, D.(2011). The response to intervention (RTI) approach in early childhood. Focus on Exceptional Children, 43(9).

13. In Ohio's QRIS centers standards, there is explicit content on monitoring and individualized supports; the home-based standards do not have explicit content, but refer to the state ELGs.

14. Ohio Step Up To Quality. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/stepupquality.stm.

Pennsylvania Keystone Stars. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS.

15. Rhode Island BrightStars. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://www.brightstars.org/providers/brightstars-quality-rating/.

Colorado Qualistar. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from https://www.qualistar.org/qualistar-rating-components.html.

16. IdahoSTARS. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://idahostars.org/?q=qris.

17. Massachusetts QRIS Standards, Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/qris/massachusetts-qris-standards.html.

18. Halle, T.; Vick Whittaker, J. E.; Anderson, R. (2010). *Quality in early childhood care and education settings: A compendium of measures, Second Edition.* Washington, DC: Child Trends. Prepared by Child Trends for the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed on Sept. 4, 2012 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_technical/reports/complete_compendium_full.pdf.