

# QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project Evaluation Report

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## QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project Evaluation Report

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of QUALITYstarsNY Readiness project. The project was implemented by the Early Care & Learning Council between August 2011 and June 2012 with a follow-up phase in October of 2012.

### Project Background

QUALITYstarsNY is a voluntary quality rating and improvement system that is designed to increase quality in early learning settings –centers, schools, and homes– throughout New York State. QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project aims to help early learning settings to be prepared for the implementation of the QUALITYstarsNY. In order to help early care and learning programs in the state through the process of self-assessment and quality improvement, the Early Care & Learning Council partnered with the New York City Early Childhood Professional Development Institute to bring training workshops to early care and learning programs on using the Environmental Rating Scale to assess their own programs.

Early Care & Learning Council provided a 2-day training-of-trainers (TOT) workshop, “QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Workshops: Facilitator’s Training Workshop,” to a selected group of participants across the state. This workshop took place in January 2012 at the Council’s office in Albany, NY at no cost to the participants. By participating in this workshop, trainees agreed to facilitate four “Introduction to QUALITYstarsNY,” three “Self-Assessment: Preparing for Program Improvement,” and three “First Steps for Quality Improvement” workshops for child care providers in their regions. Curriculum, materials, and the evaluation forms were provided to the facilitators by the Early Care & Learning Council staff members. The provider workshops took place within the six months following the facilitator workshops with at least 10 participants.

**Table 1. Timeline for major project activities**

| Project Activity                          | Time Period      |
|---|------------------|
| Pilot trainings for facilitator workshops | November 2011    |
| Actual facilitator workshops              | January 2012     |
| Provider workshops by facilitators        | January-May 2012 |
| Provider follow-up                        | October 2012     |

## Evaluation Design and Questions

Evaluation of the QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project consists of the evaluation of the TOT facilitator and child care provider workshops. Following the Kirkpatrick model of four-level training evaluation, evaluation of the QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project looked at participant satisfaction (reaction) and knowledge gain (learning) and providers' programmatic changes (behavior) and readiness to participate in QUALITYstarsNY (results). The following table lays out the measurements in four outcome areas by two groups of workshops.

**Table 2. QUALITYstarsNY Readiness project evaluation outcome areas**

| Outcomes | Facilitators   | Providers  |
|----------|--|--|
| Reaction | Satisfaction with the training, trainer, and materials | Satisfaction with the training, trainer, and materials |
| Learning | Level of knowledge before and after the trainings      | Level of knowledge before and after the trainings      |
| Behavior | Adoption of curriculums                                | Changes in practice and program                        |
| Results  |  | Readiness for QUALITYstarsNY                           |

The project implementation plan provided a framework for the development of evaluation questions. Based on the plan and the team members' input, following nine evaluation questions were used to guide the evaluation efforts. First four questions targeted facilitator outcomes and the other five questions targeted provider outcomes.

1. How satisfied are the facilitators with the train-the-trainer workshops?
2. How satisfied are the facilitators with the material provided?
3. How comfortable are the facilitators in using the materials provided?
4. Would the facilitators use the curriculum beyond their commitments for the project?
5. How satisfied are the providers with the workshops?
6. What is the level of change in provider's knowledge?
7. What is the desire level of providers to participate in QUALITYstarsNY?
8. What is the readiness level of providers to participate in QUALITYstarsNY?
9. Would the providers make any changes in their programs as a result of the workshops?

## Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation of the QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project was an impact evaluation looking at the outcomes of the facilitator and provider workshops. While learning outcome was measured through a pre-post design, other outcomes were measured through a post-only design. Data was collected

through knowledge tests and attitude surveys. Sample, instruments, and procedures of the evaluation are further explained in the following sections.

## Sample

The sample for the evaluation consists of the 24 TOT facilitators who were trained by three Early Care & Learning Council staff members and 1,294 child care providers<sup>1</sup> who were trained by the facilitators. The 24 facilitators were selected through an application and review process facilitated by the Early Care & Learning Council. Providers voluntarily signed up for the trainings that were offered by the facilitators in their regions.



Figure 1. Number of participants involved in the project's training-of-trainers workshops

## Instruments

In order to measure facilitators' satisfaction, comfort, and commitment, the *Trainers Workshops Evaluation Form* was developed. The form consisted of 11 Likert-scale rating items and 6 open-ended items. The *Workshop Registration and Attendance Form* was developed for facilitators to track and report information on their workshops and participants. The form collected basic information on the workshops and participants. The *Workshop Evaluation Form* was developed for facilitators to evaluate their workshops. Child care providers who attend the workshops completed the forms. The form consisted of 11 Likert-scale rating items and 6 open-ended items.

The *Workshop Knowledge Questionnaires* included items to measure providers' knowledge before and after the workshops. Items were developed by the Early Care & Learning Council staff members who designed the curriculum for the three workshops. For the first workshop, Introduction to QUALITYstarsNY, the questionnaire consisted of 7 true-false and 3 multiple-choice items. The second workshop, Self-Assessment: Preparing for Program Improvement, had a questionnaire with 5 true-false and 5 multiple-choice items. The questionnaire for the last workshop, First Steps for Quality Improvement, had 6 true-false and 4 multiple-choice items.

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<sup>1</sup> Because of the fact that an individual provider could attend multiple trainings, total number of unique child care providers in the sample is 903.

The *Workshop Follow-Up Survey* was administered to providers to assess their satisfaction with the workshops and the impact of the workshops. The online survey had 5 Likert-scale rating items, 4 yes-no items with open-ended response options, and one open-ended question.

## Procedures

Evaluation data on facilitators was collected and processed by the Early Care & Learning Council. Data from the providers were collected and reported by the facilitators. At the end of their commitments, facilitators submitted their registration, attendance, evaluation, and test data electronically to the Early Care & Learning Council. Staff members at the Council who were not involved in the trainings merged and cleaned the data from the facilitators for the analyses. The 6-month follow-up online survey was emailed to all providers who attended a workshop and provided a valid email address with a two week response window.

## Findings

Evaluation data was analyzed to answer the evaluation questions. The evaluation questions were targeting outcomes for facilitators and providers. Therefore, presentation of the findings is grouped into two sections as facilitator and provider outcomes.

## Facilitator Outcomes

Early Care & Learning Council conducted a two-day training event for facilitators participating in the QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project. The 24 facilitators attended three workshops on January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the Council.

Eleven rating items measured facilitators' satisfaction with the event and readiness to offer the three workshops in their regions. While the satisfaction items received mostly positive ratings, readiness items received somewhat lower ratings. Percentage of number of positive responses to total number of responses ranged from 73 % to 96 % in satisfaction items. Readiness items had positive ratings ranging from 33 % to 55 %.

*Table 3. Number and percentage of response selections to satisfaction and readiness statements*

| Satisfaction Statements                                  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Percent Positives* |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 3. Discussions were relevant and helpful.                | 1                 | 0        | 2       | 9     | 8              | 85.0%              |
| 4. Questions were <u>not</u> encouraged.                 | 20                | 1        | 1       | 0     | 0              | 95.5%              |
| 5. Materials given were useful and relevant to my needs. | 0                 | 2        | 6       | 5     | 6              | 57.9%              |
| 8. Recommended goals or                                  | 0                 | 0        | 8       | 9     | 2              | 57.9%              |

|   |                   |          |         |       |                |                    |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| suggestions were achievable.                                    |                   |          |         |       |                |                    |
| 10. Training space was <u>not</u> convenient.                   | 13                | 6        | 1       | 1     | 0              | 90.5%              |
| 11. Training time was convenient.                               | 0                 | 0        | 2       | 10    | 8              | 90.0%              |
| 12. My overall experience with the trainers was positive.       | 0                 | 0        | 1       | 7     | 12             | 95.0%              |
| 13. Overall, the workshops were not useful.                     | 5                 | 11       | 4       | 2     | 0              | 72.7%              |
| Readiness Statements  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Percent Positives* |
| 6. I can comfortably use the materials with providers.          | 0                 | 5        | 8       | 5     | 2              | 35.0%              |
| 7. I <u>can not</u> comfortably facilitate the three workshops. | 5                 | 2        | 7       | 6     | 1              | 33.3%              |
| 9. I would use these curricula in my future trainings.          | 1                 | 1        | 7       | 8     | 3              | 55.0%              |

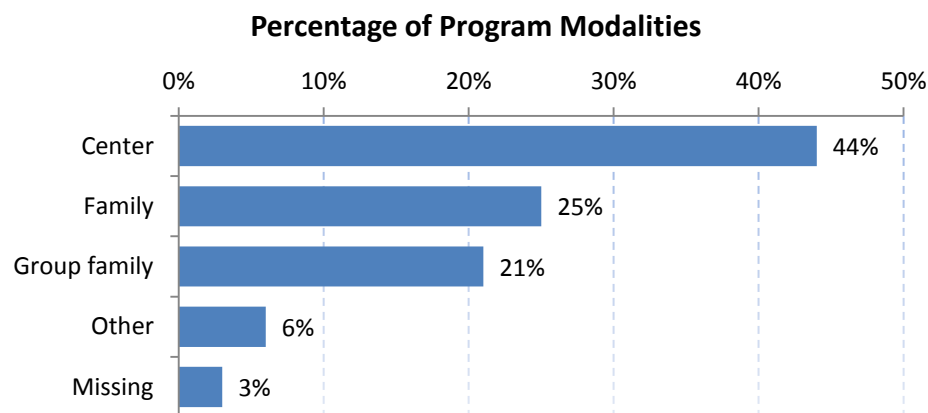
\* Positives include “Agree” and “Strongly agree” in positively-worded statements and “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree” in negatively-worded statements.

Facilitators’ responses to the open-ended question about things they liked least about the workshops showed a common topic of ambiguity of QUALITYstarsNY program standards, procedures, and other details. Even though these workshops were offered in January 2012, quality standards and other procedural information were made available later in the year. This lack of information at the time might have contributed to the discrepancy between facilitators’ satisfaction with the workshops and their perceived readiness to implement these workshops.

## Provider Outcomes

Twenty-three facilitators reported delivering 95 different workshops from January 15 to May 21, 2012. A total of 1,294 participants attended these two- to three-hour workshops. The workshops took place mostly at the local Child Care Resource & Referral agencies and community colleges in 32 different counties.

Majority of the participants (44%) reported to be providers in a center-based program. Among the individuals who attended the workshops, the number of children served in providers’ programs ranged from 0 to 900 with an average of 56. In terms of age groups served, preschoolers (28%) were the most commonly served age group.



**Figure 2. Distribution of program modality among the providers**

Workshop evaluation data from 1,253 participants were reported to the Early Care & Learning Council. As shown in the table below, participants provided a positive rating (agree and strongly agree) to given statements about the workshop 92 % of the time.

**Table 4. Providers' response selections to satisfaction statements in the workshop evaluations**

|   | Not Applicable |    | Strongly Disagree / Disagree |    | Neutral |     | Strongly Agree / Agree |     | Total |      |
|---|----------------|----|------------------------------|----|---------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------|------|
|   | N              | %  | N                            | %  | N       | %   | N                      | %   | N     | %    |
| Discussions were relevant and helpful.                | 0              | 0% | 11                           | 1% | 37      | 3%  | 1194                   | 96% | 1242  | 100% |
| Questions were encouraged.                            | 0              | 0% | 6                            | 0% | 18      | 1%  | 1221                   | 98% | 1245  | 100% |
| Materials given were useful and relevant to my needs. | 7              | 1% | 16                           | 1% | 41      | 3%  | 1175                   | 95% | 1239  | 100% |
| Recommended goals or suggestions were achievable.     | 9              | 1% | 12                           | 1% | 71      | 6%  | 1141                   | 93% | 1233  | 100% |
| My child care program can participate in QSNY.        | 79             | 6% | 21                           | 2% | 108     | 9%  | 1010                   | 83% | 1218  | 100% |
| My child care program will participate in QSNY.       | 80             | 7% | 24                           | 2% | 234     | 19% | 868                    | 72% | 1206  | 100% |
| Training space was convenient.                        | 2              | 0% | 15                           | 1% | 60      | 5%  | 1163                   | 94% | 1240  | 100% |
| Training time was convenient.                         | 2              | 0% | 28                           | 2% | 83      | 7%  | 1125                   | 91% | 1238  | 100% |



|   |     |    |     |    |     |    |       |     |       |      |
|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-------|-----|-------|------|
| Trainer was professional, knowledgeable, and well prepared. | 34  | 3% | 15  | 2% | 27  | 3% | 921   | 92% | 997   | 100% |
| My overall experience with this trainer was positive.       | 0   | 0% | 10  | 1% | 26  | 2% | 1209  | 97% | 1245  | 100% |
| Overall, the workshop was useful.                           | 2   | 0% | 16  | 1% | 34  | 3% | 1163  | 96% | 1215  | 100% |
| Total   | 215 | 2% | 174 | 1% | 739 | 6% | 12190 | 92% | 13318 | 100% |

In response to their desire and readiness to participate in QUALITYstarsNY, providers showed a relatively lower level of agreement with the statements of “My child care program can participate in QUALITYstarsNY” (83%) and “My child care program will participate in QUALITYstarsNY” (72%). In the follow-up survey, majority of the responders either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements about the workshops’ positive influence on their desire (67%) and readiness (67%) to participate in QUALITYstarsNY. Of those who applied QUALITYstarsNY at the 6-month follow-up, half of them reported that the workshops had encouraged them to apply.

Knowledge change in providers was measured through multiple-choice tests that were administered before and after the workshops. Data from pre and post knowledge tests for each of the three workshops was used to calculate a total of 1,244 pre-form scores and 1,201 post-form scores. Average scores showed a 9 percent overall increase in percentage of correct items from pre to post tests.

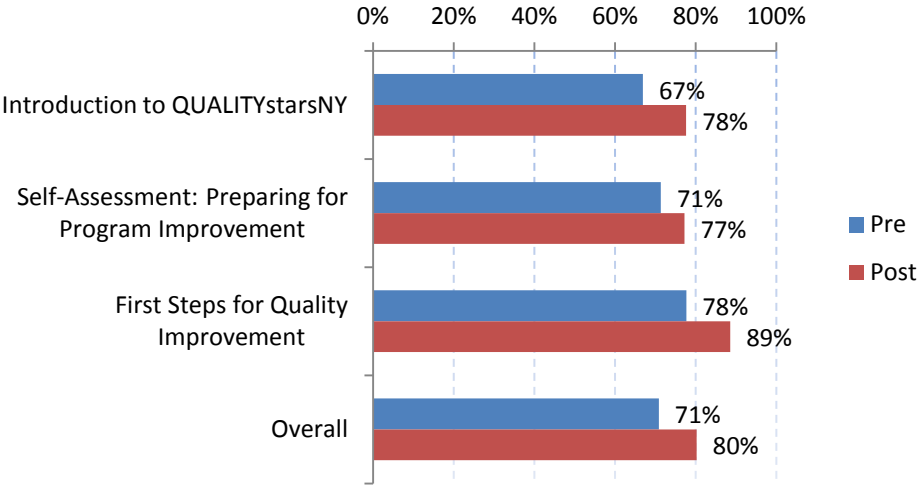


Figure 3. Percentage of correct responses in pre- and post-tests

In the 6-month follow up of the providers, they were asked whether their programs made any changes in as a result of the workshops and in expectation of their QUALITYstarsNY applications. Out of 69 providers who completed the follow-up survey, nearly half of the responders said they did (48 %) and the other half said they did not make any changes (52 %). Providers' responses to the open-ended section of the question showed that most of the providers who did not make any changes indicated that no changes were necessary in their programs.

## **Discussions and Recommendations**

The findings of the evaluation answer all the evaluation questions that were initially described. Facilitators reported high levels of satisfaction with the TOT workshops. On the other hand, they reported relatively lower levels of satisfaction with and adoption of the materials provided. In response to their comfort in using the materials with the providers and facilitating the workshops, facilitators reported lowest levels of comfort. The ambiguity at the time of project implementation regarding the standards and procedures of the QUALITYstarsNY could have resulted in these findings. Therefore, future readiness trainings should be implemented with a more definite set of guidelines and instructions for the trainers as well as the providers.

Child care providers who attended the workshops provided by the facilitators showed a high level of satisfaction with the workshops. Workshops were instrumental in increasing providers' knowledge on QUALITYstarsNY. Providers' desire to participate in QUALITYstarsNY was higher than their readiness to participate in QUALITYstarsNY. Half of the providers who returned a follow-up survey indicated that they made some changes in their programs as a result of the workshops. These findings point out the need for more support and guidance among providers for QUALITYstarsNY participation. Future readiness activities should focus on a broader segment of the provider population with specialized support for those programs that need further assistance.