Let’s Talk

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MA - QRIS and NAEYC Program Accreditation: Creating Alignments for Streamlined Quality Improvement

BUILD Initiative Let’s Talk Webinar

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Presenters

NAEYC
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EEC
Pam Roux
MA-QRIS History

- EEC formally began developing its Quality Rating and Improvement System in Massachusetts during the spring of 2008.
- Stakeholders across the Commonwealth contributed to the development of the system, including early educators and researchers.
- Massachusetts piloted a QRIS in 2009-2010.
- Revised QRIS Standards were issued on December 14, 2010.
MA-QRIS Standards

Three sets of customized standards:

- Center-based/ School-based
- Family Child Care
- After School Programs/ Out of School Time
MA-QRIS Categories

• QRIS Category 1: Curriculum and Learning
• QRIS Category 2: Safe, Healthy Indoor and Outdoor Environments
• QRIS Category 3: Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development
• QRIS Category 4: Family and Community Engagement
• QRIS Category 5: Leadership, Management and Administration
MA-QRIS Participation

• 5,313 programs are currently participating in the MA-QRIS
  o 7,635 QRIS applications
  • 6262 of those applications have been granted a QRIS Level
  o 708 of the program participating are nationally accredited:
    • 34 COA
    • 119 NAFCC
    • 555 NAEYC

*Data as of February 18, 2014
MA-QRIS Participation

QRIS Participation by Program Type

- **AFTERSCHOOL**: 845
- **CENTER**: 1,879
- **FCC**: 4,620

*Data as of October 5, 2013*
MA-QRIS Participation

QRIS Participation by Region

- Western MA: 219
- Central MA: 117
- Northeast MA: 160
- Southeast MA/CAPE/ISLANDS: 222
- BOSTON METRO: 127

*Data as of October 5, 2013
MA-NAEYC Participation: Levers

- Licensing
- Contracted Children
- Funding
  - License-plate funding
  - Educator and Provider Support (PD) Funding
NAEYC Accreditation in Massachusetts – 2013 Snapshot

• 841 currently accredited programs in Massachusetts

• In the previous 12 months:
  - 87 programs enrolled (Step 1)
  - 69 programs applied (Step 2)
  - 53 programs submitted Candidacy materials (Step 3)
  - 106 programs submitted Renewal materials (Step 4)

*Data as of November 13, 2013*
Project Approach: Related Structure

NAEYC Four Steps

- Self-Study
- Self-Assessment
- Qualify as a Candidate
  - Licensed or regulated
  - Meets minimum staff qualification standards
- Site Visit
  - Classroom and program observations by a reliable rater
  - Evaluation of documents
  - Family & Teacher surveys

MA-QRIS Four Levels

- Level 1: Licensed/regulated
- Level 2: Conduct and submit self-assessments
  - Self observations (ERS)
  - Other self-ratings (e.g., PAS)
  - Document Review
  - Staff Qualifications/PD
- Levels 3 & 4: Observer visit
  - ERS, PAS by reliable rater
  - Evaluation of documentary evidence
  - More/higher criteria at Level 4
Project Approach: Related Content

**NAEYC Standards**
- Relationships
- Curriculum
- Teaching
- Assessment of Child Progress
- Health
- Teachers
- Families
- Community Relationships
- Physical Environment
- Leadership and Management

**MA-QRIS Standards**
- Curriculum and Learning
  - Includes Assessment, Teacher-Child Relationships
- Safe, Healthy Indoor and Outdoor Environments
- Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development
- Family and Community Engagement
- Leadership, Management & Administration
MA-QRIS and Accreditation

- Performed **crosswalk** of the alignment between MA-QRIS and Accreditation Systems:
  - NAEYC
  - National Accreditation for Family Child Care
  - Council of Accreditation for Afterschool Programs
- Accredited programs do not need to provide additional **backup documentation** for items that directly align with one of the three accreditation systems
- Still need to score highly enough on **Measurement Tools** (ERS, CLASS, BAS/PAS/APT)
### MA-QRIS and Accreditation

**Criteria #** | **Standard** | **Meets Standard** | **Measurement Method**
--- | --- | --- | ---
**Level 3 1A. Curriculum, Assessment and Diversity** |  |  |  |
1A.3.3 | Program uses screening tools, progress reports, formative assessments, and information gathered through observation to set goals for individual children across all developmental domains. | □ No □ Yes | □ Please state what screening and assessment tools are used by program: Enter answer directly into box in online QRIS Program Manager (QPM).

□ How is the information gathered from screening and assessment observations used and shared between staff and families to set goals and individualized activities for children?

Enter answer directly into box in online QRIS Program Manager (QPM).  

or

□ NAEYC Accreditation

or

□ Head Start

1A.3.4 | Staff demonstrate language and literacy skills either in English or the child’s language that provide a model for children. | □ No □ Yes | □ ITERS-R and/or ECERS-R self-assessed average score of 5 with no single item below 4
Project Rationale

Issues from the programs

- Where do two systems fit together? Are they the same?
- Why do two systems?
- Time/fiscal management for both systems.

Questions from EEC/NAEYC

- Are we confident that ratings support the content alignment from the crosswalk?
- How do we reduce duplication/redundancy between systems to better serve programs?
- How can we strengthen both systems with mutual cooperation and coordination?
Project Goals

Initial

• Create **protocols** for joint site visits

• Identify **equivalent documentary evidence**
  - Program and Classroom Portfolios
  - Family and Teaching Staff Survey responses

• Provide **detailed reports** to direct state technical assistance efforts

Subsequent

• Could NAEYC tailor its site visit to always assess NAEYC criteria aligned with state’s QRIS systems?
  - Customize document reviews

• Joint **process**

• Can **rater reliability** be established between NAEYC and State QRIS raters?
Project Benefits

Massachusetts

• An evidence-based crosswalk of the intersections of the 2 systems
• Guidance about how documentary evidence meets both systems
• Integrated approach to quality improvement for all
• Eliminate administrative burden

Nationally

• Inform continuous improvement to both systems (MA-QRIS & NAEYC)
• Massachusetts’ leadership informs national dialogue about integrating the best of national and state-level quality enhancement features
Project Approach: Preparation

- Review of previous research on EEC/NAEYC crosswalk by Education Development Center (EDC)
- Crosswalk of content by NAEYC/EEC Specialists
- Crosswalk of documentary evidence by NAEYC/EEC Specialists
Project Approach: Participation

20 Massachusetts Center-based or School-Based programs that are:

- Awaiting NAEYC a first-time accreditation visit or a renewal visit; AND
- Enrolled in QRIS and awaiting a visit for:
  - Level 2
  - Level 3
  - Level 4
Project Approach: Visit

Joint visit by NAEYC Assessors and EEC Staff

- 2 Assessors conduct each visit and do observations together
- Visit is scored for accreditation decision same as any other site visit
- Assessors also rate document evidence for whether it meets related QRIS criteria

One Specialist joins each NAEYC visit
- Rate NAEYC document evidence for whether it meets related QRIS criteria
- Compare ratings with NAEYC Assessors and discuss rating differences
Project Approach: Procedure

Compare Ratings to:

- Increase Inter-rater reliability
- Guidance Development

NAEYC Assessors

- Use NAEYC scoring rules to score and decide if program is accredited / renewed

EEC PQ Specialists

- Use EEC rules to decide if program meets Level 3 (or 4) for document evidence
Let’s Talk
Distribution of Criteria Rated

- **Total of 58 evidence ratings** made independently by NAEYC Assessor and EEC Specialist
- **32 QRIS criteria rated** using NAEYC document evidence
  - 29 criteria rated using Program Portfolio evidence
  - 4 criteria rated using Classroom Portfolio evidence
  - One criterion rated using both PP & CP
- **Evidence from 39 NAEYC criteria** was reviewed to make the QRIS ratings
  - 29 NAEYC criteria in Program Portfolio,
  - 10 NAEYC criteria in Classroom Portfolio
# Example 1: Related Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence for this NAEYC Criterion...</th>
<th>...was used to rate these MA-QRIS Criteria:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>10.E.06</strong>: The program offers benefits packages for full-time staff who have satisfactorily completed their introductory period of employment. Written policies detail employee benefits and include: a. <em>health insurance</em>; b. <em>employee leave, including sick, vacation, holiday, and personal leave</em>; c. <em>education benefits</em>; and d. <em>retirement</em>. The written policies are shared with each employee. Benefits for part-time employees are available on a prorated basis. If some or all of these benefits are not available, a written plan for improving benefits is developed and implemented.</td>
<td><strong>5B.3.2</strong>: Staff receive at least one benefit (paid <em>vacation time</em>, <em>sick time</em>, <em>health insurance</em>, <em>tuition/PD reimbursement</em> or <em>retirement plan</em> option).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5B.4.1</strong>: Program offers a benefit package that includes <em>vacation, sick time, and health insurance</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Example 2: Related Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This MA-QRIS Criterion...</th>
<th>...was rated using evidence for these NAEYC Criteria:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1B.3.2:** Educators are provided with opportunities to use outside consultants or staff with expertise in the age of the children served to assist them in implementing strategies that support positive relationships/interactions and prevention/intervention techniques. | **3.B.12:** Teachers address challenging behavior by:  
   a. assessing the function of the child’s behavior.  
   b. **convening** families and **professionals** to develop individualized plans to address behavior.  
   c. using positive behavior support strategies. |
|  | **8.A.05:** Program staff identify and establish relationships with **specialized consultants** who can assist all children’s and families’ full participation in the program. This assistance includes support for children with disabilities, behavioral challenges, or other special needs. |
Data Analysis: Documentary Evidence

Are some criteria basically equivalent? If you passed the NAEYC criteria, would you pass the QRIS criteria?

- NAEYC 39 Criteria pass rates:
  - Average pass rate: 85%
  - Range: 33% low to 100% high

- QRIS 32 Criteria pass rates:
  - NAEYC assessors: 58% average
  - EEC Specialists: 50% average
Data Analysis: Documentary Evidence

Can NAEYC Document Evidence be used to rate QRIS Criteria?

- 91% of the time QRIS Criteria could be rated from the related NAEYC criteria evidence
- Raters also saw evidence elsewhere in the portfolios that could be rated for QRIS

If the criteria are not *equivalent*, does NAEYC evidence include the information you would need to rate QRIS criteria?
Data Analysis: Rater Agreement

Do NAEYC Assessors and QRIS Specialists agree on how to rate this evidence?

- What is the inter-rater agreement for these 2 types of raters?
  - 66% for PP ratings
  - 63% for CP ratings

- Correlation between raters: .82

- What kinds of issues affected rater agreement?
Let’s Talk
Process Lessons: Criterion

Criteria have to be articulated with ratings guidance

• How to rate criteria for specific program circumstances
• How to deal with incomplete or missing evidence
  o Follow up interview?
  o How much time to provide more evidence?
Process Lessons: Guidance

Guidance can take various forms

- Ratings options, such as when a criterion is “Not Applicable” to a program or group
- Examples of evidence meeting or not meeting the criterion
- Intent of the criterion
- Definition of terms used in the criterion
Process Lessons: Guidance

Guidance can take various forms

- Guidance creation/revision is an ongoing process!
- Set up a structure for considering issues, questions, evidence-based changes in recommended best practice
Process Lessons: Protocols

Reliable Rater/Specialists Visits must have consistent elements in order to be fair to all

- Need a process for **continuous improvement** of your QRIS system
  - Reliability of raters/specialists is not just established once
  - Continuous communications systems
  - Continuous training procedures
  - Continuous monitoring of rater/specialists errors and outcomes
Process Lessons: Protocols

Reliable Rater/Specialists
Visits must have consistent elements in order to be fair to all

• Protocols for how the visit is conducted
• Professional practices of raters/specialists
• Conflict of interest guidelines for raters/specialists
• Forms and worksheets to guide and enforce consistent evaluations
Process Lessons: Appeals

QRIS Level Decisions can be high-stakes for the programs

- **When** can a program appeal a decision?
- **What** is the formal process?
- **Who** decides an appeal?
- **How** do appeals decisions then inform your knowledge about the process?
Process Lessons: Feedback

To know your system, you have to know it from all angles

• Are you asking participating programs:
  o How they feel about your process: Too slow? Too cumbersome?
  o Do they think your outcomes are fair?
  o Do they have suggestions for improvement?

• Are you asking your staff and raters:
  o What is difficult to carry out in the system?
  o Do they think the outcomes are fair?
Process Lessons: Improvement

Quality Systems are always in revision

• NAEYC launched a revised, evidence-based system in 2006. At the time it felt like we were “Building the bicycle while riding it”
• MA- QRIS feels the same way now
• This phase is probably unavoidable for any QRIS system
• At some point you have to launch
• You must create structures for continuous improvement of your system
Let’s Talk
If the NAEYC evidence does not completely cover what QRIS is looking for:

- Could programs be instructed to provide some additional detail with their NAEYC portfolio evidence?
- Could NAEYC assessors rate that enhanced evidence for QRIS?

Can NAEYC Document Evidence be used to rate QRIS Criteria?
NAEYC can work with states to integrate QRIS document ratings into the NAEYC document rating process

- This project showed us that can be done
- Start with a content crosswalk
- Establish shared understandings of content as rated
- Develop guidance for programs about specific evidence that meets in both systems

Can NAEYC collaborate with QRIS systems on program evaluation and information exchange?
NAEYC can consult with state QRIS systems as they scale up and develop system support structures

- We have worked out processes over many years
- Appeals process
- Communications and feedback processes among stakeholders
- Protocols to enhance reliability of ratings and decisions
- Continuous system improvement processes

Can NAEYC be a resource for state QRIS systems as they build out ancillary processes?
We will all benefit if we can quantify the relationships between NAEYC assessment tools and commonly-used published instruments

- Clear content overlap between these instruments and NAEYC standards & criteria
- Equivalencies (e.g., levels and cut points) await clarification
- NAEYC group ratings could be accepted in lieu of others

NAEYC seeks partners to validate NAEYC ratings against ERS, CLASS, PAS and others.
NAEYC’s new Accreditation Management System (AMS) will allow us greater flexibility and precision

• Family and Teaching Staff surveys will be fully automated and could be shared with state TA
• Self-assessed group and document ratings will be submitted and also could be shared with states

NAEYC data system enhancements in 2014/15 will support greater Quality Improvement power
NAEYC’s new AMS will allow:

• Enhanced and customized Annual Report process that sets and then evaluates specific program improvement goals

• Refined data reporting -- for example, detailed reporting to QRISs profiling NAEYC programs in their states

NAEYC data system enhancements in 2014/15 will support greater Quality Improvement power
NAEYC is interested in accepting state data to improve our system efficiency

- States are the experts on professional development profiles
- State licensing regs inform program compliance with many NAEYC criteria
- Awarded QRIS levels can be a proxy for more criteria
NAEYC is creating new tools for self-assessment and for accreditation decision:

- For use within or outside of accreditation process
- Derived from current content but clearer, concise
- Linked to definitions, examples & resources
- Organized by levels of difficulty, so content is engaged in steps
Questions, Reflections, Comments?
Thank You

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The PowerPoint and related materials will be posted on the QRIS NLN website under Webinars:
http://qrisnetwork.org/webinars