



QRIS in Statute and Regulations

About QRIS

A quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels, QRIS award quality ratings to early and school-age care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards. By participating in their State's QRIS, early and school-age care and education providers embark on a path of continuous quality improvement. Even providers that have met the standards of the lowest QRIS levels have achieved levels of quality that are beyond the minimum requirements to operate.

QRIS are composed of five common elements: (1) standards; (2) accountability measures; (3) program and practitioner outreach and support; (4) financial incentives; and (5) parent/consumer education efforts.

The National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement does not endorse any non-Federal practice, organization, publication, or resource.

QRIS in Statutes and Regulations

The approach chosen by a State to implement its QRIS depends on several factors, including the needs of the State, the goals of the system, and the State's political context. For example, States that embed a QRIS in statute may have a history of rooting other programs in statute. Also, operationalizing a QRIS within statute depends on the type of system the State has chosen to implement. In a rated license system, each rated license is a property right that needs a repeals process to revoke, so it will require statutory language. Finally, States may proceed by statute when their regulatory authorities are insufficient to authorize every QRIS aspect.

The following is information about a sample of QRIS in State statutes and regulations. Four of these States have established QRIS through legislative action: **Kentucky, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Tennessee**. Information about **Colorado's** School Readiness Initiative is included, which is related to a QRIS. Also included is a list of additional States that have regulations that govern the administration of the QRIS.

QRIS in Statute

Colorado

Qualistar Rating System

<http://www.qualistar.org/home.html>

The Qualistar Rating System is a tool to measure quality in licensed center and family child care homes and preschool programs, for children from birth to kindergarten. The Qualistar Rating System evaluates programs in five areas: (1) learning environment, (2) family partnerships, (3) staff training and education, (4) child-staff ratios/group size, and (5) program accreditation. It also assigns ratings of one to four stars to each program.

House Bill (HB) 02-1297, the School Readiness Initiative, was unanimously passed by the Colorado Legislature and signed into law in June 2002. In July 2002, the Colorado Child Care Commission adopted Educare Colorado's (now Qualistar's) Quality Rating as the accepted rating system to fulfill the school readiness rating system established through HB 02-1297. HB 02-1297 states the following:

(5) School-readiness rating system. The state child care commission created pursuant to section 26-6-304 shall adopt a voluntary school-readiness rating system. Such rating system shall measure the level of preparedness of and quality of services provided by a child care provider to prepare children to enter elementary school. The school-readiness rating system shall:

- a) Measure such elements of quality of a child care facility as:
 - i. The quality of the learning environment;
 - ii. The quality of adult-child interactions;
 - iii. Adult-to-child ratios;
 - iv. Provider credentials, including recognized credentials through the state department's voluntary credentialing system developed pursuant to section 26-6.5-103 (8); and
 - v. Parent-involvement activities at the child care facility;
- b) Be variable to inform parents, counties, and other purchasers of child care about the level of quality at a child care facility in a simple and easy-to-understand manner;
- c) Be supported by statistically valid research as a reliable measure of quality of a child care facility;
- d) Include a quality improvement plan that informs rated child care providers of their strengths and weaknesses and that provides such child care providers with strategies to improve the quality of their services; and
- e) Have demonstrated effectiveness at improving the level of quality of child care providers in geographically diverse Colorado communities.

HB 02-1297 is available at

[www.leg.state.co.us/2002a/inetcbill.nsf/billcontainers/F453E914F9BF456F87256B22004BB389/\\$FILE/1297_enr.pdf](http://www.leg.state.co.us/2002a/inetcbill.nsf/billcontainers/F453E914F9BF456F87256B22004BB389/$FILE/1297_enr.pdf).

Kentucky

STARS for KIDS NOW Child Care Quality Rating System

<http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc/stars/>

STARS for KIDS NOW is Kentucky's voluntary child care quality rating system. The program has four levels of quality and has standards for certified family child care homes, licensed type I centers, and licensed type II centers. The legal authority for the STARS for KIDS NOW program is within the *Kentucky Revised Statutes* (KRS), which states the following:

199.8943 Quality based child-care rating system – Administrative regulations.

1. The Early Childhood Development Authority shall, in consultation with child-care providers, the Cabinet for Families and Children, the Cabinet for Health Services, and others, including but not limited to child-care resource and referral agencies and family resource centers, develop a voluntary quality-based graduated child-care rating system for licensed child-care and certified family child-care homes based on, but not limited to:
 - a) Child to caregiver ratios;
 - b) Child-care staff training;
 - c) Program curriculum; and
 - d) Program regulatory compliance.

2. The Cabinet for Families and Children shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A to implement:
 - a) The voluntary quality-based graduated child-care rating system for child-care and certified family child-care homes developed under subsection (1) of this section;
 - b) Agency time frames of reviews for rating;
 - c) An appellate process under KRS Chapter 13B; and
 - d) The ability of providers to request reevaluation for rating.

Effective: July 14, 2000

History: Created 2000 Ky. Acts ch. 308, sec. 15, effective July 14, 2000.

This document is available at <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/KRS/199-00/8943.PDF>.

The regulations that govern the STARS for KIDS NOW program are available at <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/922/002/170.htm> for child care centers and <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/922/002/210.htm> for family child care providers.

North Carolina

North Carolina Star Rated License

http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/parents/pr_sn2_ov_sr.asp

In September 2000, the North Carolina Division of Child Development began to issue star-rated licenses to all eligible child care centers and family child care homes. (Note: Religious-sponsored child care programs continue to operate with a notice of compliance and do not receive a star rating.) This is a voluntary licensing system, established in statute in which a child care program can earn points in two areas: program standards and staff education.

The legal authority for the rated license system is within the *North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 110, Child Welfare*, which states the following:

Article 7

Child Care Facilities

§ 110-90. Powers and duties of Secretary of Health and Human Services

The Secretary shall have the following powers and duties under the policies and rules of the Commission:

- 4) To issue a rated license to any child care facility which meets the standards established by this Article. The rating shall be based on program standards, education levels of staff, and compliance history of the child care facility.

This document is available at

http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByChapter/Chapter_110.html.

Rhode Island

BrightStars Quality Rating

<http://www.brightstars.org/providers/brightstars-quality-rating/>

The mission of BrightStars is to help families in Rhode Island access quality child care, early learning, and school-age programs; help child care providers learn about best practices in early learning and apply them to the care children receive; and to recognize program quality and give parents information to make choices about their children's care and education.

Child care and early learning programs participating in BrightStars receive recognition for going "above and beyond;" develop goals and strategies to guide improvement; and gain access to local and national resources that support program quality.

- **Child care centers and preschools** are assessed across 9 quality standards and 22 quality criteria, and one or more unannounced site visits are conducted;
- **Family child care homes** are assessed across 7 quality standards and 15 quality criteria, and one or more unannounced site visits are conducted; and
- **School-age child care programs** are assessed across 8 quality standards and 14 quality criteria, and one or more unannounced site visits may be conducted.

Legislation establishing a voluntary statewide Quality Rating System was passed in May 2007 and is available at <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE42/42-12/42-12-23.1.HTM>.

Tennessee

Child Care and Evaluation Report Card Program and Star-Quality Child Care Program

<http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/adfam/ccrcsq.html>

In 2000 and 2001, Tennessee launched a broad program to give more information to parents and improve child care in the State. This program includes the Child Care Evaluation and Report Card Program and the Star-Quality Child Care Program.

The Child Care Evaluation and Report Card Program is required for all licensed and approved child care providers in Tennessee. In the license renewal process, the State evaluates providers on several areas of quality. Family and

group homes are evaluated on the following five areas: caregiver training and education, compliance history, parent and family involvement, business management practices, and program assessment (onsite observation). Child care centers are evaluated on the following seven areas: director qualifications or experience, education, and training; education, training, and previous work experience of teaching staff; compliance history; parent and family involvement; ratios and group sizes; pay and benefit plans for staff; and program assessment (onsite observation).

The Star-Quality Child Care Program, unlike the Report Card Program, is voluntary. This program recognizes child care providers who meet a higher standard of quality. Once qualified for this program, providers can receive one, two, or three stars to place on their licenses. Each star shows that a provider meets increasingly higher standards. Both programs require a program assessment.

Legislation was passed in June 2000 that established the Tennessee Star Quality Licensing System. The legislation is available at <http://tennessee.gov/sos/acts/101/pub/pc981.pdf>.

Regulations implementing the legislation—*Rules of Tennessee Department of Human Services Adult and Family Services Division, Chapter 1240-4-7, Report Cards and Rated Licensing for Child Care Agencies* (August 2007)—are available at <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1240/1240-04/1240-04-07.pdf>.

Wisconsin

YoungStar

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/default.htm>

The Joint Finance Committee of the Wisconsin Legislature passed a motion on June 23, 2010 allowing the implementation of the YoungStar QRIS. *Motion 38* spells out how YoungStar will be implemented, including immediate training and technical assistance opportunities that the Department of Children and Families offered in fall 2010. Full text of the motion is available at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/motion38.pdf>.

QRIS in Regulations

The following States have a set of regulations that govern QRIS administration.

Arkansas

Better Beginnings

<http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/>

- *Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System Rule Book* (May 2010)
http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/downloads/BB-Rule-Book_060110.pdf

Iowa

Iowa Child Care Quality Rating System

<http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/iqrs/>

- “Chapter 118: Child Care Quality Rating System” in “Section 441: Human Services” of the *Iowa Administrative Code* (12/1/2010)
http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/policyanalysis/PolicyManualPages/Manual_Documents/Rules/441-118.pdf

Louisiana

Quality Start

<http://www.qrslouisiana.org/>

- “Chapter 51. Child Care Assistance Program” in “Subpart 12. Child Care Assistance” of “Part III. Family Support, Title 67 – Social Services” in the *Louisiana Administrative Code* (February 2010)
<http://doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/67v01/67v01.doc>

The regulations for Quality Start are in “Subchapter C: Quality Child Care Rating System.”

Oklahoma

Reaching for the Stars

<http://www.okdhs.org/programsandservices/cc/stars>

- “8.3. Certification of Facilities to Receive a Differential Quality Rate” in “Part 1. General Provisions” in “Chapter 110. Licensing Services” in *Oklahoma Administrative Code* (7/1/2010)
<http://www.okdhs.org/library/policy/oac340/110/01/0008003.htm>