Quality improvement efforts among early childhood programs participating in Iowa’s Quality Rating System (QRS)

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“A Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS) is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care & education and after-school settings.”

– Anne W. Mitchell
Iowa QRS Ratings:

- 5 levels of quality
- Voluntary
- Centers & homes
- Quality improvement supports
Quality Improvement Supports

- **Training**
- **Continuing Education**
- **Coaching**

**Financial Incentives**

**Non-financial Incentives**
Data

• Survey collected by Iowa DHS on quality improvement activities
• Iowa QRS ratings

Analysis

• Descriptive statistics
• Logistic regression analysis
Almost all programs train staff, but meeting a benchmark of 15 hours per year was less common.

- Did not provide training: 3%
- Provided training to at least some staff: 97%

Average training of 15 hours or more for key staff: 47%
Average training under 15 hours for key staff: 53%

n = 382
n = 349
Two thirds of programs provided coaching, but monthly coaching was rare.

- Did not provide coaching: 35% (n = 385)
- Provided coaching to any staff: 65% (n = 385)

- Staff receive coaching monthly or more: 15% (n = 377)
- Staff do not receive coaching monthly or more: 85% (n = 377)
Health and safety was the most common topic of training or coaching.

The percentage of programs with training or coaching on each topic is as follows:

- Health and safety practices: 92%
- Child development: 85%
- Classroom practices: 76%
- Quality Rating System participation: 65%
- Program self-assessment: 55%
- Program management: 54%
- Family engagement: 47%

n = 376
Staff at approximately one-third of programs were pursuing a degree or a credential

- Some staff pursuing degree or credential: 36%
- No staff pursuing degree or credential: 64%

n = 388
Financial incentives were more common than nonfinancial incentives

- Received grants: 39% (n = 387)
- Did not receive grants: 61%

- Received equipment or materials: 16% (n = 387)
- Did not receive equipment or materials: 84%
Almost half of programs received a higher rating when they were re-rated in Iowa QRS.

- 45% Rating increased
- 52% Rating remained the same
- 2% Rating decreased

n = 172 programs that were re-rated in Iowa QRS
Management PD and 15+ hours of training were positively related to rating increases.

More likely to increase rating:
- Management topics: 3.01
- Fifteen or more training hours: 2.90
- Grants: 2.90
- Continuing education: 2.24
- Coaching monthly or more: 1.49
- Self-assessment topics: 1.44

More likely to maintain same rating or decrease rating:
- Classroom practices topics
- Nonfinancial incentives
- Training with follow-up
- Child development topics

n = 146
Takeaways

• About half of programs met 15-hour training benchmark, and these programs were more likely to increase their QRS ratings

• Topics of PD seem to matter for rating increases, but relationships are unclear
Thank you!

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