Thresholds of Quality

What does it mean in the trenches?
Implications for QRIS

- Cut-points used for leveling in QRIS (and on scales) are often arbitrary; we need further evidence to better establish cut-points in QRIS.

- We are often starting too low—in some cases raising quality to the “active” level should be our starting point.

- Cut-points for leveling can be different for different measures (types of thresholds); e.g. differences across the ERS family.
Implications

- Encourage continuing improvement even for programs at higher levels of quality. Often quality at higher levels has most impact on child outcomes.
Further Evidence

- NC data indicated relationship between star level and child outcomes (knowledge perception & social skills) but ONLY between 1, 2, & 3 stars AND 4 & 5 stars.
- Hoped for differences among the 5 levels not present for any child outcomes.
- Levels not meaningfully discriminating in relation to child outcomes.
How high are the stakes?

- **Subsidy in North Carolina**
  - Infant/Toddler rates
    - 1-star rate=$450 per month; $5400 per year
    - 5-star rate=$790 per month; $9480 per year
  - 3-5 year-old rates
    - 1-star rate=$390 per month; $4680 per year
    - 5-star rate=$625 per month; $7500 per year

- If a program has 20 infants/toddlers & 50 preschoolers on subsidy—difference between 1-star and 5-stars=$222,600 per year.
How high are the stakes?

- In NC, only 3-5 star programs are eligible for subsidy dollars; providers, particularly family child care homes could lose funding.

- Difficult for programs to improve when lower reimbursement rates continue the cycle of low quality.
Remaining Questions

- How can we modify our QRIS to reflect the possibility of needed flexibility in cut-points based on program types, income and/or ethnicity of children?

- What does this information communicate about the calibration of instruments used to measure quality?