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 between1, 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.

- 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.

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➢ 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?