

2011 STAM – CCPRC Meeting
Plenary Session 3
November 16, 2011, 4:15-5:30 pm

Findings from the QRIS Assessment Project

Description

This plenary session applied findings from the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Assessment Project to important State questions in the areas of systems-building and quality measurement. Researchers presented on the role that QRIS has played in building State systems of early care and development and focusing efforts across agencies and sectors. Lessons about ensuring the validity and reliability of QRIS initiatives were also presented. A State representative served as discussant.

Facilitator

Kathryn Tout, Child Trends

Presenters

Gretchen Kirby, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
Pia Caronongan, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
Kimberly Boller, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Discussant

Barbara West Wall, Tennessee Department of Human Services

Scribe

Rebecca Starr, Child Trends

1. Documents in Session Folder

- “Findings from the QRIS Assessment Project;” Kimberly Boller and Gretchen Kirby
- “QRS Assessment Plenary Discussion Topic;” Kimberly Boller (Handout)
- “Findings from the QRS Assessment Project;” Pia Caronongan

2. Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1:** Gretchen Kirby
 - Purpose of QRIS Assessment Project was to: Address States’ needs for information on the implementation and evaluation of QRIS; and to gather information about the state of QRIS research toward the goal of increasing State capacity for monitoring and evaluation.
 - Tasks and goals of the project included the following:
 - A Compendium of QRIS: overview of 26 QRIS.
 - QRIS Evaluation Toolkit: resources for monitoring and evaluating QRIS.
 - Two in-depth studies: gathering and synthesizing in-depth information on quality measurement (five QRIS) and systems-building (two QRIS). The Quality Measurement Study included Miami-Dade, Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee).

- Secondary data analysis: aggregate findings about quality measurement across QRIS (Miami-Dade, Illinois and Tennessee).
 - In-Depth Study of QRIS in ECE System Integration (Indiana and Pennsylvania).
 - Purpose was to define approaches used by QRIS to connect with other ECE programs through eight system components: governance and infrastructure, provider and program engagement, financing, quality assurance, standards, professional development, dissemination of information, and accountability.
 - Three approaches to integration were identified:
 - Embed governance, administrative, and service structures (QRIS as a “one-stop” shop for child care providers that involves integration at multiple levels including PD, TA, licensing, subsidy, early intervention, etc.);
 - Cross-program accountability (common tools and resources that support PD and QI across programs); and
 - Reciprocal responsibility (e.g., QRIS as a conduit to licensing, funding sources, early learning guidelines, collaboration across ECE programs). QRIS and other ECE programs provide financial supports and TA to providers who provide quality improvement results.
 - Key ingredients for integration: openness to change and continuing to widen the circle (continuing to ask how a policy or initiative in one program can be incorporated into others, e.g., new training initiatives use common program development infrastructure).
 - Challenges to integration: differences in context necessitate differences in details; vision, planning and patience are required.
 - Practical lessons:
 - Jump in anywhere. Incremental change is better than no change.
 - Use efficiencies to make a case for integration. Use resources that already exist; combine data collection efforts.
 - Use the eight system components as a planning and analytic tool.
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Pia Caronongan**
 - Findings from the QRS Project: In-depth study of quality measurement (Miami-Dade, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Tennessee).
 - How is quality measured in QRIS?
 - *Validity: how well do ratings capture quality?* Ratings are meaningful, components have breadth and depth, and ratings are well-constructed in terms of combining components and cut-points.
 - Components of ratings—some are typically included, and some are getting increased recognition.
 - Components are tapping multiple dimensions of quality, but there is still a lot of variability in terms of specificity and rigor (i.e., large variations in measurement of family partnerships).
 - Composition of ratings is influenced by accreditation and licensing standards; requirements for highest ratings are similar; there is more variation in requirements at lower levels.
 - No compelling rationale for number of levels or cut-points in levels.

- Other issues affecting validity: setting high standards vs. encouraging participation; creating an inclusive and fair system vs. recognizing fundamental differences among types of providers; and setting specific requirements at each level vs. providing multiple ways to achieve each.
 - Are ratings reliable measures of quality and assigned in a consistent and systematic manner?
 - What affects reliability? Standardization of procedures; training of assessors and raters; maintaining procedures over time and between raters; and sources of data.
 - There is more consistency in some sites than others; procedures for gathering evidence (apart from ERS) are just beginning to be standardized.
 - Training protocols for assessment of non-ERS components is less formal (no set protocol for maintaining inter-rater reliability).
 - Lessons learned
 - Goals for validity and reliability evolve as systems continue to grow.
 - Availability of resources influences breadth and depth of measures, and data collection procedures.
 - Systematic data collection is important for monitoring progress and ongoing refinement.
 - Transparency and communication with providers is critical.
 - **Summary of Presentation #3:** Kimberly Boller
 - Kim led participants in a small group activity that involved two questions:
 - What one or two findings from the systems presentation could you take back to engage stakeholders in your State? What do you still need to know?
 - Thinking about where you are in ensuring quality measurement systems are reliable and valid, what information do you need to support this work?
 - **Summary of Presentation #4:** Discussant: Barbara West Wall
 - What can we take back to the state?
 - Road-mapping process: importance of looking at history, where other States are, and at systems issues.
 - Learn from implementation process; take back to stakeholders
- 3. Summary of Discussion with Presenters and Participants**
- Question: How does QRIS impact licensing? Rules can't stay static. Need to work on consistency in application of rules and ratings.
 - QRIS is still evolving...no one has "the" final system.