Findings from the QRS Assessment Project

November 16, 2011

Presentation at the Joint Meeting of the State and Territory CCDF Administrators and the Child Care Policy Research Consortium
In-Depth Study of Quality Measurement
How is quality measured in QRIS?

- Are QRIS ratings valid? How well are ratings capturing child care quality?
- Are QRIS ratings reliable? Are ratings assigned in a consistent and systematic manner?
Are QRIS Ratings *Valid* Measures of Quality?

- Validity ensures that the ratings are meaningful

- What affects validity?
  - Components of the ratings
    - Breadth and depth
  - Construction of the ratings
    - How components are combined
    - Where the cut-points are for each level
Components of Ratings are Growing Broader

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Components typically included

Increased recognition

Emerging components
Some Components are Not Measured for All Providers

Source: Analysis of data from Illinois, Miami-Dade, Florida and Tennessee conducted as part of the QRS Assessment project.
Composition of ratings are influenced by accreditation and licensing standards

- Requirements for the highest rating are similar
- More variation in requirements at lower levels

No compelling rationale for number of levels or specific cut-points in intermediate levels
Other Issues Affecting Validity

- Setting high standards vs. encouraging participation

- Creating an inclusive and fair system vs. recognizing fundamental differences between providers
  - Level 2 center = Level 2 family child care provider?
  - Level 2 center = Level 2 Head Start?

- Setting specific requirements at each level vs. providing multiple ways to achieve each
  - Level 2 center = Level 2 center?
Reliability ensures that ratings are assigned systematically and consistently.

What affects reliability?
- Standardization of procedures
- Training of assessors and raters
- Maintaining procedures over time and between raters
- Sources of data
Procedures for ERS Assessments

- Based on ERS developers’ guidance

- Challenges and areas of inconsistency
  - Training to reliability with ERS developers
  - Completing multiple scales
  - Mix of announced/unannounced visits
  - Sampling classrooms
Procedures for Other Components

- Procedures for gathering evidence (apart from ERS) are just beginning to be standardized.

- Training protocol for assessment of non-ERS components is less formal.
  - No set protocol for maintaining inter-rater reliability.

- Varied approaches and data sources:
  - Document review
  - Director interview
  - Observation
  - Standardized assessment.
Lesson 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 key.
For More Information on the QRS Assessment Project

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- Website to access products:
  - http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_quality