Taking a QRIS to the Next Level

Presentation at STAM/CCPRC
November 16, 2011

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Acknowledgements

• Beth Rous,  
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• Mary Beth Jackson  
  Kentucky Division of Child Care
Reflecting on a Mature QRIS

• After a decade of implementation, what is the status of the QRIS?
  – Density of participation
  – Rating levels of participants
  – Effectiveness of technical assistance
  – Use of the system by parents

• What is new in QRIS nationally? What has been learned?

• What improvements can be made?
Rating level of STARS Participants

![Bar chart showing the rating levels of STARS Participants]

- Certified Homes:
  - Level 1: 27
  - Level 2: 38
  - Level 3: 39
  - Level 4: 4

- Type I Facilities:
  - Level 1: 114
  - Level 2: 433
  - Level 3: 163
  - Level 4: 20

May, 2011
Process Evaluation of Kentucky STARS for KIDS NOW

• Five key evaluation questions
  – How do STARS quality standards align with other quality frameworks?
  – What rating process and structures will produce a valid rating?
  – How can STARS technical assistance be enhanced?
  – What strategies can increase provider participation and parent engagement with STARS?
  – How can coordination, collaboration and administrative processes be strengthened?
Approach

• Engage in a collaborative process to identify research questions
• Identify strengths in the current system on which revisions/changes can be built
• Use a multi-method approach and a variety of data sources
  – Interviews with providers and QRIS staff
  – Household survey of parents
  – Analysis of administrative data
Selected Evaluation Activities and Findings
Quality Standards

• Strategy: Conduct a cross-walk of existing standards with foundational KY documents and with national QRIS

• Findings: Standards are aligned with some domains but there are opportunities to improve

• Recommendations: New standards could address curriculum, assessment, screening and referral, and provisions for children with special needs
Rating Process

• Strategy:
  – Interview providers to learn which standards are most challenging, which standards they meet above their current level, and which new standards they could meet.
  – Use data to examine the level providers would achieve under four alternative rating structures (points and hybrid structures).
  – Example: Model a hybrid structure with blocks at levels 1 and 2 and points at levels 3 and 4.
Family child care homes are more likely to be rated at a level 3 or 4 in this alternative model.
About half of child care centers move from level 2 to 3, but there is not much movement to level 4.

Model 3: Type I Facilities

Number of Facilities

Level 1  Level 2  Level 3  Level 4

Actual  Model 3
Considerations for Revising Rating Structure

• What “weight” should be assigned to new standards/indicators? Where should indicators be placed in the system?

• Is it important to know rating levels within quality categories or is one overall rating preferred?

• How important is transparency of each level? What balance is preferred between simple and complex?
Outreach to Parents

• Strategy: Conduct a household survey of parents to learn about early care and education preferences and recognition of STARS

• Findings:
  – 17% of parents recognized the name STARS for KIDS Now
  – Two-thirds of parents report that they would use a STARS rating to select a provider

• Recommendations:
  – Target outreach to parents who are in process of making early care and education decisions
  – Align marketing efforts with values that parents have about early care and education
Summary

- A process evaluation can inform regular review of a QRIS and highlight areas for revision or refinement.
- Recommendations for system changes will have implications for cost, staffing and support. It is important to have a plan and timeline in place for making system changes.
- Elements of the evaluation reflected OCC goals for early care and education initiatives to be child-focused, family friendly and fair to providers.
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