



Key Elements of a QRIS Validation Plan: *Guidance and Planning Template*

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Key Elements of a QRIS Validation Plan: Guidance and Planning Template

Investments in state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) for early care and education and school-age care (ECE-SAC) are growing across the country. As a result, stakeholders are requesting evidence to demonstrate that QRIS are making progress toward desired goals. A critical piece of evidence about QRIS effectiveness includes information about the ability of a QRIS to measure and rate quality accurately; yet, this technical issue is challenging to define and translate into a study design. QRIS administrators are seeking resources and technical assistance that can assist in sorting out the goals and methods associated with different validation questions and approaches. **The purpose of this guidance and planning template is to provide a practical tool that states and evaluators can use to develop QRIS validation efforts.**

This guidance is compatible with the perspective on validation that was provided in the application for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. It also builds on the information provided in the QRIS Evaluation Toolkit (Lugo-Gil et al., 2011) and a Brief on QRIS validation (Zellman & Fiene, 2012) produced with the support of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.

What is QRIS validation?

Validation is defined as a **multi-step process that assesses the degree to which design decisions about *program quality standards and measurement strategies* are resulting in accurate and meaningful ratings (Zellman & Fiene, 2012).** Researchers and QRIS stakeholders describe QRIS validation as part of a continuous quality improvement process in which findings are used to inform initial QRIS design and revisions that can improve the effectiveness of the QRIS in achieving desired goals. QRIS validation is not an effort that will result in a “yes-no” decision about a QRIS. As Zellman and Fiene state, “Validity is not determined by a single study; instead, validation should be viewed as a continuous process with multiple goals: refining the ratings, improving system functioning, and increasing the credibility and value of rating outcomes and of the QRIS system as a whole” (2012, p. 5). The framework presented in this guidance document and planning template is intended to support the development of plans that reflect this definition of validation.

Zellman and Fiene (2012) provide an overview of four-interrelated approaches to QRIS validation, summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Four Related Approaches to Validating a QRIS (originally printed in Zellman & Fiene, 2012)

Approach	Activities and Purpose	Typical Questions Approach Addresses	Issues and Limitations
<p>1. Examine the validity of key underlying concepts</p>	<p>Assess whether basic QRIS quality components and standards are the “right” ones by examining levels of empirical and expert support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do the quality components capture the key elements of quality? ▪ Is there sufficient empirical and expert support for including each standard? 	<p>Different QRISs may use different decision rules about what standards to include in the system</p>
<p>2. Examine the measurement strategy and the psychometric properties of the measures used to assess quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine whether the process used to document and verify each indicator is yielding accurate results. ▪ Examine properties of key quality measures, e.g., inter-rater reliability on observational measures, scoring of documentation, and inter-item correlations to determine if measures are psychometrically sound. ▪ Examine the relationships among the component measures to assess whether they are functioning as expected. ▪ Examine cut scores and combining rules to determine the most appropriate ways to combine measures of quality standards into summary ratings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the reliability and accuracy of indicators assessed through program administrator self-report or by document review? ▪ What is the reliability and accuracy of indicators assessed through observation? ▪ Do quality measures perform as expected? (e.g., do subscales emerge as intended by the authors of the measures?) ▪ Do measures of similar standards relate more closely to each other than to other measures? ▪ Do measures relate to each other in ways consistent with theory? ▪ Do different cut scores produce better rating distributions (e.g., programs across all levels rather than programs at only one or two levels) or more meaningful distinctions among programs? 	<p>This validation activity is especially important given that some component measures were likely developed in low-stakes settings and have not been examined in the context of QRIS.</p>

Approach	Activities and Purpose	Typical Questions Approach Addresses	Issues and Limitations
<p>3. Assess the outputs of the rating process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine variation and patterns of program-level ratings within and across program types to ensure that the ratings are functioning as intended. ▪ Examine relationship of program-level ratings to other quality indicators to determine if ratings are assessing quality in expected ways. ▪ Examine alternate cut points and rules to determine how well the ratings distinguish different levels of quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do programs with different program-level ratings differ in meaningful ways on alternative quality measures? ▪ Do rating distributions vary by program type, e.g., ratings of center-based programs compared to ratings of home-based programs? Are current cut scores and combining rules producing appropriate distributions across rating levels? 	<p>These validation activities depend on a reasonable level of confidence about the quality components, standards and indicators as well as the process used to designate ratings.</p>
<p>4. Examine how ratings are associated with children's outcomes.</p>	<p>Examine the relationship between program-level ratings and selected child outcomes to determine whether higher program ratings are associated with better child outcomes.</p>	<p>Do children who attend higher-rated programs have greater gains in skills than children who attend lower-quality programs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate demographic and program level control variables must be included in analyses to account for selection factors. • Studies could be done on child and program samples to save resources. • Depending on study design, findings may not demonstrate that QRIS causes observed outcomes but may generate hypotheses about how quality influences children's outcomes.

Table 1 and the full Validation Brief will provide important background for preparing a Validation Plan. Before proceeding with the planning template outlined here, it will be useful to access this Brief. A link is provided in the final section of this document.

What are the key elements of a Validation Plan?

A comprehensive QRIS Validation Plan is one that includes both context and technical details. It places the plans for validation in the larger picture of the ECE-SAC system in the state or locality. Ideally, a validation plan will connect a set of priority questions to the realities of the QRIS including the stage of implementation, the social and political context and the questions that stakeholders have about functioning of the QRIS.

This guidance and planning template describe seven elements to help achieve the dual goals of describing context and technical approach to QRIS validation:

1. QRIS status and context
2. Engaging QRIS stakeholders in the planning process
3. QRIS data infrastructure
4. Planning specific research questions and validation approach
5. Selecting data collection and analytic strategies for each research question
6. Presentation of findings to stakeholders
7. Qualifications of the evaluator

Each of these elements is described in more detail in the sections that follow. A rationale for each element is provided along with key questions that should be addressed in the plan.

Purpose of this section in a validation plan:

- **Provides a rationale and motivation for the validation study**
- **Demonstrates that the validation study is aligned with and compatible with the stage of implementation of the QRIS**
- **Places the plans for the validation study in the larger context of the state’s early care and education system as well as the national context for early learning policy and practice**

A first step in planning validation activities involves conducting a system scan to determine the validation questions and approach that will be most informative for the QRIS. A number of factors can be considered in this analysis. This section of the plan should provide information about the process used to develop the QRIS validation study plans including: details about the stage of QRIS implementation; context for the validation study; and, any background information on the QRIS, quality improvement efforts or the early care and education system in the state or nation that will be informative for a validation study.

In what stage of implementation is the QRIS?**_____ Initial development**

Stage-appropriate activities in initial QRIS development focus primarily on validation of the quality standards in the QRIS. Committee or expert panels may be used to develop the standards and indicators and the criteria that will be used to rate each indicator. An evaluation team or consultant could be used to review the development process and assess the feasibility and relevance of the selected standards and indicators. A virtual pilot could also be conducted in this phase using secondary data to examine different hypothetical structures or standards for the QRIS.

_____ Early implementation and/or pilot

Stage-appropriate validation activities in early implementation or during a pilot include examination of key quality concepts and psychometric properties of the tool used for rating. Depending on the length and scope of a pilot, activities to validate the ratings with external quality assessments and/or children’s development may be appropriate. In addition to validation activities, a process or implementation evaluation may also be included to assess the roll-out of the rating process to ensure measurement and ratings are being used as planned. A review could be conducted, for example, of the type of evidence required to document each quality standard. Finally, a virtual pilot could be conducted at this phase using secondary data to examine different hypothetical structures or standards for the QRIS.

_____ Full implementation

In full implementation, validation activities can expand beyond an examination of quality concepts and measurement issues to include an examination of how ratings are linked with external measures of quality and children’s developmental outcomes. These types of studies

require stability in the QRIS and an understanding of how the QRIS has penetrated the early care and education market (e.g., density of program participation, population served, percentage of high needs children attending QRIS-rated programs, etc.).

_____ Exploring redesign or revisions

A redesign or major revisions to a QRIS could be informed by findings from any of the primary validation activities. Using existing data to conduct a virtual pilot or explore alternative QRIS models is particularly appropriate at this stage because a range of approaches can be compared without having to implement multiple rating schemes with programs.

What is the context for the validation study?

_____ Is the validation study required in the state? If yes, what are the required components of the study?

The validation study may be required by Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant requirements or by the state legislature. If the study is required, it is important to assess whether the proposed design addresses the mandated criteria. The plan should include a description of the mandated criteria and how the study design will address each.

_____ Did the state develop an RFP for the validation study? If yes, is the plan responsive to the RFP requirements?

The plan should describe clearly how different activities/tasks meet the criteria outlined in the RFP.

_____ What additional factors provide context for the validation study?

The plan should include information about any additional issues or concerns that will frame the validation study. For example, a state may be initiating a redesign or revision process because of concerns from stakeholders about the quality indicators or the rating tool. These factors should be included and described.

_____ What previous evaluation findings and/or QRIS data inform the study?

The plan should include any findings that indicate both successes and potential problems with the current QRIS. For example, data on scoring patterns or on movement across levels of the QRIS may indicate that there are issues in the QRIS that should be investigated more thoroughly in a validation study. In addition, influential findings from other state validation studies might also be referenced in this section.

What is known about the population of children, families and programs statewide/in the geographic area served by the QRIS?

Basic data on the populations served by the QRIS and participating in the QRIS provide essential context for a validation study. For example, demographic information about the population of children in the state will be useful for determining the feasibility of certain assessment approaches; similarly, information about the types of ECE-SAC programs in the state will be needed to determine the range of observation tools used in a validation study (if this strategy is selected). The INQUIRE Data Tools (see link in the final section of the document) will be useful to access for this section.

_____ Data on children and families

To the extent possible, the plan should include basic data on population demographics broken down by any high priority categories (e.g., geography, race/ethnicity). This information will facilitate an understanding of the population and the current status of the ECE-SAC system. Data quality or coverage issues should be noted. Possible categories include:

- Race/ethnicity
- Family income
- Home language
- Child care subsidy receipt
- “High Needs” children (as defined in the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant application)
- Criteria indicating high risk (e.g., mothers’ education level)
- Patterns of early care and education program use by families (include use of different program types – center-based care, Head Start, pre-kindergarten, family child care)

_____ Data on early care and education programs

The plan should include basic data on all early care and education programs in the state (data on the QRIS will be described below) broken down by high priority categories (e.g., geography, program type). These data provide the “denominator” in calculations of QRIS density and portraits of who is and is not served by the QRIS. Data quality or coverage issues should be noted. Possible categories include:

- Program location
- Program type
- Serves high needs children
- Child care subsidy receipt

What are the characteristics of the QRIS?

If available, it is important to have data on the characteristics of the QRIS and any information on how characteristics of the QRIS have changed over time. The basic characteristics to document include:

_____ Characteristics of the early care and education market

If available, features of the early care and education market should be documented including:

- Number of programs, by program type and geographical region
 - Center-based programs, including Head Start, pre-kindergarten programs, licensed child care centers and license-exempt centers
 - Licensed family child care
- Number of programs that have achieved national accreditation or other state-designated accreditation
- Number of programs eligible to participate in the QRIS
- Capacity of the market and number of children served
 - Number of high needs children served
- Subsidy policies
 - Tiered reimbursement for programs meeting quality standards
 - Criteria for legally license exempt programs eligible to serve children receiving subsidies
 - Numbers of legally license exempt programs serving subsidized children, by program type

_____ Characteristics of QRIS programs

If available, characteristics of QRIS rated programs should be documented including:

- Enrollment in the QRIS, by program type and geographical region
- Density of QRIS participation, by program type and geographical region
- Comparison of QRIS rated programs to non-rated programs in the system
- Distribution of program ratings
- Patterns of QRIS program improvement in the past 2-5 years
 - Number of programs moving up more than one level
 - Number of programs moving down more than one level
- Number and percentage of programs exiting the QRIS annually
- Number and percentage of high needs children served in QRIS rated programs
 - Number and percentage of high needs children served in QRIS programs with the highest rating

Validation results reviewed in the context of these basic descriptive data will promote a more accurate interpretation of the results and enhance stakeholders' ability to determine the implications of the findings. For example, a skewed or compressed distribution of program rating scores should be interpreted differently in the context of a 5% participation rate compared to a 60% participation rate.

Purpose of this section in a validation plan:

- **Outlines a process for engaging state- and national-level QRIS stakeholders in the planning process for the validation study**
- **Demonstrates key connections to external resources to ensure that the validation plan is thoroughly vetted**

Early in the process of planning a validation study, it is important to engage a variety of QRIS stakeholders who can provide contextual and technical support. Engaging these stakeholders will help ensure that the study is fulfilling the expectations of key individuals and organizations in the system. A process of gathering technical input on the approach and design of the study will contribute to the integrity of the data collection and analysis.

_____ What is the process to engage QRIS stakeholders in review of the plan and later dissemination efforts?

A process to engage stakeholders at multiple levels should be described. This process may include the convening of an advisory committee for the validation study or plans for the validation study team to attend and/or present at implementation team meetings. The plan may also include a description of how input may be prioritized if there are conflicting opinions about different components or expectations of the study.

_____ Is there a plan to convene a technical advisory group or panel to review the study?

A high quality plan will include resources to gather input on the technical features of the study from internal and external experts. Feedback from these groups will help ensure that the plan is technically sound.

Purpose of this section in a validation plan:

- Provides a description of the data available to support a validation study
- Describes a process for using different data sources and ensuring data integrity

A next step in providing the foundation for a validation plan is describing the data infrastructure that can support the study. This section of the plan should outline the data sources that will be used in the validation study and the procedures that will be used to ensure data integrity. For each data source, the plan should describe basic data elements and any known issues related to the feasibility of accessing the data (including the availability of any support documents – like codebooks – to assist with using the data and key contact for the data). Anticipating and addressing these issues at the outset of the study will facilitate data transfers and analysis. The INQUIRE Data Tools (see link in the final section of the document) are designed to support data planning and will be useful to access for this section.

_____ What QRIS and early care and education system data will be available and used in the validation study?

The plan should include information about each data source that will be accessed for the study and details about the source and the level of raw data available for analysis (e.g., availability of indicator data in the Environment Rating Scales, not just total scores). A table similar to Exhibit A would be helpful to include.

Exhibit A. Overview of state QRIS data sources

Data Source	Availability of specific data elements	Accessibility –provisions to share data	Additional Notes
Licensing			
Facility database (e.g., NACCRRAware)			
QRIS application or enrollment form			
QRIS rating records			
Program observation data			
Workforce registry			
Early learning/school readiness assessments			
K-3 assessments			
Other			

_____ What data will be collected for use in the validation study?

The plan should include information about each data source that will be collected. A table similar to Exhibit B would be helpful to include.

Exhibit B. Overview of data collected for the purposes of the validation study

Data Source	Details	Challenges/Precautions	Additional Notes
Observational measures of quality (list all)			
Interviews/Surveys of program practitioners			
Interviews/Surveys of parents			
Direct child assessments (list all)			
Attendance data (to track dosage)			
(Add others if available)			

_____ Description of IRB and data security provisions

The plan should contain details about IRB review and approval of the study design and procedures as well as information about data security provisions.

_____ Description of data sharing agreements

If data sharing agreements are needed, the plan should provide details about how these agreements will be developed.

_____ Will a database be used to store data for validation?

If data are collected for the validation study, the plan should provide information about how the data will be stored. If the data will be shared or linked across organizations, details should be provided about the process by which this linking will happen?

Purpose of this section in a validation plan:

- **Describes the questions to be addressed in a validation study**
- **Demonstrates how the research questions address specific stage-appropriate questions**
- **Presents a clear scope for what the validation will and will not be able to assess**

A central component of a validation plan is the description of the questions that will be addressed. This section of the plan should outline clearly the specific questions that will be addressed and the overall approach to the validation study. In reviewing the plan, it will be helpful to categorize the type of validation questions according to the description of four interrelated validation strategies outlined by Zellman and Fiene (2012) in the OPRE brief on validation.

_____ Approach 1: Review the QRIS standards and indicators

If this approach is proposed, the plan should outline the process by which the standards and indicators will be reviewed. Appropriate strategies may involve a literature review or expert panel consultation. The strategies should be systematic and objective.

_____ Approach 2: Examine the measurement strategy and the psychometric properties of the measures in the QRIS

If this approach is proposed, the plan should provide concrete examples of the data that would be used and the analyses that would be conducted. The plan could include sample figures and graphs to demonstrate what the analyses will yield and the criteria for determining “acceptable” levels of functioning.

_____ Approach 3: Examine how the ratings (or components of the ratings) function

If this approach is proposed, the plan should provide concrete examples of the data that would be collected and the analyses that would be conducted. Sample figures and graphs can demonstrate what the analyses will yield. It will be important to outline hypotheses about how ratings will be related to measures. For example, if the plan will examine how scores on the environment rating scales vary by program rating, expectations for acceptable levels of variation should be included. It could be that significant differences are only expected between the two highest and two lowest rating levels but not between each level. These hypotheses and the rationale for each should be incorporated into the plan.

_____ Approach 4: Analyze how ratings are associated with children’s outcomes and other outcomes of interest

If this approach is proposed, the plan should provide concrete examples of the data that would be collected and the analyses that would be conducted. Sample figures and graphs can demonstrate what the analyses will yield. It will be important to outline hypotheses about how the ratings will be related to children’s outcomes and how results will be interpreted. For

example, in most study designs, causality can't be attributed to linkages between ratings and children's outcomes. The plan should provide information about how linkages will be tested and how children's outcomes will be compared. For example, controlling for key demographic characteristics, outcomes may be compared across children in programs with different rating levels or to children in non-participating programs. If standardized measures are used, outcomes can be compared to national norms. The plan should specify the data that will be collected to assist with understanding children's experiences in the settings. For example, it will be important to collect information about children's exposure to early care and education settings by documenting attendance. Even if daily records are not available, it may be possible to have teachers report on basic attendance patterns.

_____ **A combination of approaches is used.**

Ideally, a validation plan will propose to use a combination of approaches. These should be described with a focus on sequence and timing of activities. The plan should offer a rationale for how the proposed combination of approaches will provide collective information to inform the QRIS.

_____ **What questions won't be answered by the proposed design/approach?**

It is important for a validation plan to be clear about the major questions that will not be addressed in the study. For example, if a quasi-experimental design is used, the plan should be clear about the potential influences on outcomes that are not fully addressed by the study, since these influences may at least partly explain observed relationships between QRIS and children's outcomes. If the plan examines one rating structure, it should be stated that the findings can't be used to assess the validity of other types of rating structures (unless the approach involves a virtual pilot using secondary data). Limitations of the approach should be transparent to stakeholders.

Purpose of this section in a validation plan:

- **Describes the data collection and analytic approach that will be used to address each research question**
- **Demonstrates appropriate use of rigorous techniques to ensure high quality findings**
- **Describes approach to developing alternative designs or approaches if implementation does not proceed as planned**

Each question in the validation plan should be accompanied by a clear data collection and analytic strategy. The selected strategies should ensure integrity in data collection and analyses and minimize the risk of drawing inappropriate conclusions from the data. Because most proposed approaches are likely to be descriptive or quasi-experimental, it is essential that the plan include an appropriate sampling frame and use of rigorous analytic techniques. It is also helpful for a validation plan to outline circumstance that may cause the design to shift or when alternative approaches may be needed.

Questions to be asked about plan include:

_____What is the proposed sampling frame?

For questions that examine the functioning of program ratings or their linkages with outcomes, it is important to identify a sample of programs/ratings that is appropriate for the questions. Does the sample include sufficient numbers of programs at all rating levels? What types of programs will be included in the analyses? Will different strategies be used for different program types? What geographical areas will be represented? A power analysis will provide critical insights to this section of the plan.

_____What statistical controls will be included?

To the extent possible, analyses of ratings linked with child outcomes should be conducted using standard controls. These may include controls for family characteristics such as income, race/ethnicity, parental education and prior skill level.

_____What is the timing of data collection?

The plan should describe the procedures that will be employed to ensure tight coordination between measures of program quality from the QRIS and other external measures gathered for the study such as observed quality and children's outcomes.

_____Who will collect the data, and how will they be trained?

The plan should contain information about hiring, training and supervision of data collection staff. In particular, how will reliability be determined and achieved? What procedures will be used to maintain reliability and data collection procedures across geographic areas?

_____ What statistical techniques will be used?

The plan should include technical information about the statistical models that will be used for each key question. Specification should be provided about techniques that will be employed (propensity score matching, hierarchical linear modeling, instrumental variables) to analyze the data.

_____ How will data be presented?

The plan should include sample tables and figures to highlight the strategy for presenting data in a report or memo.

_____ What circumstances may arise that would cause a shift in plans or design?

Most studies will experience unforeseen circumstances that disrupt the proposed design or analysis. This is particularly true early in implementation of a new initiative or pilot. The plan should anticipate some of these circumstances (for example, delays in enrollment, low enrollment numbers, challenges in securing agreement to participate in a research study) and briefly describe potential responses or alternative approaches that will be considered.

Purpose of this section in a validation plan:

- **Connects the work of the validation study to reporting requirements**
- **Describes the approach to engaging key QRIS stakeholders in the dissemination of findings**
- **Describes how findings will be used for continuous quality improvement and to inform the national QRIS context**

Ensuring that findings from a validation study are shared with stakeholders in a timely and responsible way is a critical activity. The validation plan should include a description of the strategies that will be used to report on and disseminate the findings and use the findings in a feedback loop to inform continuous quality improvement as well as the national QRIS context. Ideally, these plans will be developed in collaboration with QRIS administrators to ensure that appropriate strategies are used.

_____ How will the findings be used to comply with reporting requirements?

The plan should clearly connect the work of the validation study with any reporting requirements. These may include performance measures for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, the Quality Performance Report, state- or program-level performance management indicators or other required internal or external reports.

_____ What is the dissemination plan for the findings?

The plan should offer a clear process for dissemination of the findings to key stakeholders and the public. Will a designer be hired to assist with creating a reporting strategy that is accessible and easily understood?

_____ How will the findings be used to inform continuous quality improvement?

The plan should describe the process by which findings will be shared with the QRIS and used to correct course or to make revisions to the rating process (or other feature of the QRIS).

Purpose of this section in a validation plan:

- **Demonstrate the qualifications of the evaluator to conduct the validation study**

The final section of the validation plan should contain information about the proposed evaluator and qualifications to conduct the validation study. The plan should provide details about the evaluator (internal or external) including previous projects and qualifications of staff.

_____ **What is the selection process for the evaluator?**

The plan should describe the rationale for selecting an internal or external evaluator and the selection process that will be/was used.

_____ **What are the qualifications of the proposed team conducting the validation study?**

The plan should describe the qualifications of the team selected for the work and the alignment between the qualifications and the tasks outlined in the plan.

What are the primary challenges of QRIS validation studies?

In 2012, the Early Learning Challenge Collaborative and the Quality Initiatives Research and Evaluation Consortium (INQUIRE) sponsored complementary meetings of states and researchers on the topic of QRIS validation. In preparation for the meetings, states responded to a survey about their validation efforts to date and their needs related to validation.

When asked to report on the primary challenges encountered with QRIS validation, 36% of 28 state respondents (from 19 states) described **funding** as a key challenge. Indeed, the funding available (or not) for a validation study is an essential determinant of the approaches that can be used. Any approach that is used will require resources, but certain approaches will not be possible without significant fundraising. The costs of approaches that rely on new data collection (from practitioners, parents or children) for example, may be prohibitive, while approaches that can be conducted with existing data (such as a virtual pilot) will likely be less expensive. Weighing different approaches and their respective costs will be a central activity in the development of a validation plan.

Nearly 40% of state respondents also reported that **identification of priorities** for a validation study is challenging. To address this challenge, it is important to engage stakeholders as well as evaluators early in the process to ensure that different perspectives are considered and priorities are captured.

Finally, about a third of state respondents described the process of **developing a validation design** as a major challenge. The purpose of this template is to provide input on design options. However, as more states develop and conduct validation studies, it would be useful to gather plans and share findings so that cross-state learning is possible.

What additional resources are available to support the development of a validation study?

In the last five years, OPRE has supported a variety of resources that can be accessed to assist with the development of a validation plan. The following resources will be useful to review:

[Validation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for Early Care and Education and School-Age Care](#)

Research-to-Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2012-29
Gail L. Zellman & Richard Fiene

[INQUIRE Data Tools:](#)

- Dictionary of Common Data Elements for Quality Rating and Improvement Systems and Other Quality Initiatives
- A Guide to Linking Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation Questions about QRIS and Quality Initiatives with Data Elements and Indicators
- Best Practices in Data Management for Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: Part 1
- Data Governance and Structures to Support Data Integrity
- Best Practices in Data Management for Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: Part 2
- Data Processing and Analysis

[The Quality Rating and Improvement System \(QRIS\) Evaluation Toolkit](#)

OPRE Report, 2011-31
Julieta Lugo-Gil, Samina Sattar, Christine Ross, Kimberly Boller, Gretchen Kirby & Kathryn Tout

[Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education Settings: A Compendium of Measures, Second Edition](#)

OPRE Report 2010
Tamara Halle, Jessica Vick Whittaker, & Rachel Anderson

[Evaluation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for Early Childhood Programs and School-Age Care: Measuring Children's Development](#)

Research-to-Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2011-11c
James Elicker & Kathy R. Thornburg

[Effective Evaluation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for Early Care and Education and School-Age Care](#)

Research-to-Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2011-11a
Gail L. Zellman, Richard N. Brandon, Kimberly Boller & J. Lee Kreader