Field Test Update

An impressive 275 programs have applied for a QRIS level! The first portfolios are currently being reviewed by a team at Teaching Research Institute (TRI) and the results are expected to be shared by October.

Numbers

Commitment to Quality Designees: 275
Certified Center: 129
Certified Family: 80
Registered Family: 66

Number of Children in the Programs: 8033

Snapshot for September/October 2013

This month, 29 programs are expected to receive their portfolio review and quality rating from the QRIS. The articulation process of accredited NAEYC, NAFCC, ACSI, and OPQ programs to the QRIS is in process and will be completed this fall, including training for programs at the OAEYC conference in October. The Head Start crosswalk is continuing to be developed. Additional statewide rollout is planned for 2014. Oregon’s QRIS Facebook page has been posted. https://www.facebook.com/OregonQRIS
Stories from the Field

“I decided to step up to the plate.”

-Kathy Miller, Registered Family Provider

Kathy Miller, a Registered Family provider from Portland, was facing a big decision when she heard about Oregon’s QRIS from a fellow provider. Kathy’s life was at a crossroads and she had to decide whether to plan to retire or not. She decided to “step up to the plate” and recommit to her profession. Kathy attended the Multnomah County Child Care Resource and Referral Provider Appreciation Day, where they took the QRIS Increasing Quality Training.

At first glance, the task of applying to the QRIS seemed daunting for Kathy, particularly around her registry step. After learning she had been given a Step 2, she submitted her materials of hundreds of credit hours over her 20 years of work and training. Kathy moved from a Step 2 to a Step 6!

Kathy received assistance from her Quality Improvement Specialist, Deb Johnson. Kathy was surprised to learn how many resources exist to support providers and programs. Her next steps include finding specific trainings in specific Core Knowledge Categories to further increase her step.

When asked what motivated Kathy to apply to the QRIS, she answered, “I want to prove that I am a quality provider. I take what I do very seriously. I love my job.” She hopes that the QRIS will send the message about quality providers “out past the field.”

Kathy has received a Commitment to Quality designation and just submitted her quality improvement plan. Congratulations to Kathy on her outstanding successes so far, and best wishes for her ongoing QRIS work!

In July, Oregon was awarded a Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Supplemental Award of $10.2 million. The award will continue program quality improvements for children with high needs through activities related to QRIS. The following strategies support the award and link with the Early Learning Council priority initiatives with QRIS:

1. Increase participation of Early Learning & Development Programs on the QRIS and build workforce capacity
2. Public Access: Consumer information, social marketing, parent engagement
3. Support an aligned system of screening between early childhood, families and health
4. Align Early Childhood Education with Kindergarten-3rd grade teaching and learning; Kindergarten assessment
5. QRIS Data System

The Race to the Top Team is drafting the statement of work for the supplemental award.
Through the generous support of the Build Initiative, an Oregon team recently attended the 2013 QRIS National Meeting. The title, "Moving from What? to Why? and How? The Lessons of the Past Informing the Next Generation of QRIS," illustrates the focus on developing, implementing and revising the next generation of quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS). There was strong emphasis on "applying research to practice" in the sessions. Many sessions included both researchers sharing the latest studies and state leaders who shared how those studies relate to actual practice in their states. There were many opportunities to hear from other states about their “lessons learned.”

The team identified some key points learned that will drive future work:

- Specific strategies to engage parents and providers in consumer education campaigns
- Increased professional development needs for the workforce to prepare for the federal early childhood initiatives
- Strategies to maximize supports, incentives, and investments to build and retain a knowledgeable workforce
- Opportunities for cross-state validation work
- Specific strategies for acknowledging quality rated programs
- Cross-sector technical assistance and collaboration

The meeting presentations are available at: http://www.qrisnetwork.org/lt/2013-qris-national-meeting/overview
The Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD) recently completed a pilot phase of MyORO with programs and staff who have received a Commitment to Quality level in the QRIS. Practitioners had the ability to view their Professional Development Statement (PDS) which shows what training has been submitted and accepted, training topics, the date each class was taken, the hours, the Core Knowledge Category of the training, and the actual documents that were submitted. The PDS also includes completed college degrees and credentials that were submitted. If transcripts are submitted, the PDS shows college course titles, date, and hours given and the core knowledge category of the class.

Feedback from individuals was received through an on-line survey of participants. Overall, the ratings were very satisfactory and small changes were identified as being needed or helpful. Changes will be made accordingly with a phased statewide rollout anticipated beginning in September.

A Revised Oregon Registry Step Application is now available on the OCCD website at pdx.edu/occd/forms-and-resources. The revised Oregon Registry Step Application has new features including:

- There is a location to notate if the individual works with a program that is part of Oregon's Quality Rating and Improvement System.
- All applications will be evaluated for the highest Step possible, eliminating the need to request a Step.
- The hardship fee request is now included in the Step Application, rather than as a separate mail-in form.
- Incomplete Step Applications will now be returned to individuals for completion and resubmission.

**QRIS Validation Study…Supporting the QRIS**

The Race to the Top grant requires states to conduct a validation study of their QRIS. What does a validation study do? The purpose is to ensure that quality ratings designated through the QRIS accurately reflect the quality of care that programs are providing. How is a validation study conducted? Validation involves observations of programs participating in the QRIS. Data from these observations will not affect the designation awarded to any individual program. Validation data are kept strictly confidential. This information is not shared with the raters or with anyone else outside the validation research team. Oregon's research team is comprised of staff from Oregon State University and Portland State University.

Although providers will not get direct feedback from the validation team's observation, they will know that they are making an essential contribution that will benefit everyone. Providers are working to give the highest quality care, and the validation study team is working to ensure that the ratings are the most efficient and effective. Programs’ willingness to work with the validation team’s observers is essential to ensuring a strong rating system. Practitioners and directors can be confident that what the team observes during the validation study is confidential, and that their participation in the validation study will help to improve the QRIS rating system in the future!
Oregon’s QRIS is on Facebook!

The goal of the QRIS Facebook page is to engage families, providers, partners, and community members as the QRIS develops, providing updates, articles, and facts about Early Childhood. Check out the Oregon QRIS Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/OregonQRIS

Share Your Input!

Please join us for the QRIS input session at Roth’s Hospitality Center, West Salem, on Thursday, October 3, 2013 from 11-12:30pm. This will be the last input session in this format. After a year of input sessions, the Office of Child Care would like to thank all of the participants for their generous time and thoughtful feedback which continue to strengthen the QRIS and its ongoing development. You have made a huge difference in Oregon’s QRIS and in turn will positively impact Oregon’s children!

As Oregon’s QRIS moves forward into further statewide rollout, QRIS partners and staff are participating in opportunities to get input from stakeholders and providers to hear feedback around the state and further inform the process evaluation. Please come share your ideas and input about the QRIS, ways to obtain feedback moving forward, and hear about initial next steps to continue gathering and analyzing the feedback.

Questions: Contact us at OregonTQRIS.Emp@state.or.us

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