

## Rhode Island Quality Rating System Partnership

A Quality Rating System is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education and school-age care settings. This includes child care centers, family child care homes, preschool and nursery schools, and after school programs for elementary and middle school age youth.

Experience in other states shows that designing and implementing a Quality Rating System (QRS) is a proven strategy to systemically improve the quality of care children experience. Based on the success of Quality Rating Systems nationally, Rhode Island has established a 30-member steering committee to design a reliable system to assess the quality of early care and education and after school programs. The United Way of Rhode Island is providing funding for the 24-month research and development phase which is being coordinated by Rhode Island Kids Count with support from an expert consultant team, including Anne Mitchell from the National Child Care Information Center and Erin Oldham from Glenwood Research.

High-quality child care produces positive outcomes for children and poor quality child care produces poor outcomes. A Quality Rating System measures the quality of early care and education and after school programs against a common set of community-developed research-based standards, offers supports to help programs meet these standards and promotes the quality of programs to parents and other consumers through easily recognized symbols, usually stars. Eleven states and the District of Columbia have developed a Quality Rating System for child care programs; an additional 25 states are in the process of designing or considering a Quality Rating System.

A Quality Rating System will improve the quality of care in Rhode Island as quality becomes more visible and as systems to support, reward, and recognize quality are put in place. A Quality Rating System will strengthen and build on the licensing system, will provide an organizing framework for professional development and quality improvement strategies, and will be a means to track progress toward improving the quality of programs across the state. A Quality Rating System will provide parents with much needed information about quality. Across the country, parents report being unsure about how to go about evaluating child care quality.

We anticipate the following outcomes as a result of the implementation of a Rhode Island QRS:

- Increased numbers of children in higher-quality early care and after school programs.
- Identifiable group of community-based early care programs that meet standards to be certified as pre-kindergarten programs.
- Information on quality readily available to parents.
- More providers working to improve quality and moving up to higher quality levels.
- Improved licensing and monitoring systems.
- Strengthened and coordinated professional development and quality improvement systems.
- Enhanced school readiness of young children.

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### Timeline

February 2005	Retreat to explore QRS – Presentations from NC, VT, and OK
April 2005	QRS Steering Committee established
September 2005	United Way of Rhode Island provides funding for development of QRS
October 2005	QRS Standards and Measurement Work Group established
November 2005	Community Forum
January 2006	Parent/family focus groups
June-Sept. 2006	Draft recommended standards and framework circulated for comment
September 2006	Community Forum
2006-2007	Pilot and statewide implementation planning/Community Forums and outreach
Fall 2007	Pilot QRS/Evaluate/Refine plans
Fall 2008	Begin statewide QRS implementation

### Steering Committee

Brenda Almeida, Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families  
Blythe Berger, Rhode Island Department of Health  
Charlotte Boudreau, Boys and Girls Club of Providence  
Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT  
Anna Cano-Morales, Rhode Island Foundation  
Donna Chartier, Little Darlings Family Day Care  
Christine Chiacu-Forsythe, Ready to Learn Providence  
Jennifer DeFrance, Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children  
Elizabeth Devaney, Providence After School Alliance  
Marianela Dougal, Progreso Latino  
Maryann Finamore-Allmark, Rhode Island Child Care Policy Coalition  
Diane Horm, University of Rhode Island  
Thelma Jimenez, Family Child Care Provider  
Khadija Lewis Kahn, Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center  
Shevaun Keogh-Walker, CHILDSPAN  
Eva LaCroix, Family Child Care Homes of Rhode Island  
Cindy Larson, Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund  
Susan Libutti, Comprehensive Child Care Services Program/Department of Human Services  
Kim Maine, Rhode Island Child Care Directors Association  
Reeva Sullivan Murphy, Rhode Island Department of Human Services  
Mary Nugent, Rhode Island Head Start Association  
Larry Pucciarelli, Rhode Island Head Start Collaboration/Department of Human Services  
Karen Pucciarelli, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Rosemary Raygada, Family Child Care Provider  
Mary Ann Shallcross Smith, Rhode Island Coalition for School-Age Child Care  
Molly Soum, Cambodian Society of Rhode Island  
Cecilia Tarty, Family Child Care Provider  
Celeste Thomason, Family Child Care Provider  
Julie Valladares, Options for Working Parents  
Adriana Vargas, Rhode Island Parent Information Network  
Kelly Wishart, United Way of Rhode Island  
Carol Wolfe, Barrington Early Childhood Center

### Questions?

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