

Massachusetts' Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Pilot

Final Evaluation Report
June 2010

Funded by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Massachusetts' Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Pilot was successfully launched by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) in the Spring of 2010. This implementation evaluation report documents the accomplishments and lessons learned. It begins with findings related to the initial activities regarding the start-up and development of the QRIS Pilot including the engagement process activities, followed by findings related to the participating programs, and finally focuses on the recommendations for a future full-scale implementation.

In sum, the evaluation found that between January 2010 and June 2010:

- EEC completed the planned QRIS Pilot activities.
- EEC engaged the providers in completing desired QRIS Pilot activities.
- The Pilot produced desired EEC outputs in terms of the QRIS application process and materials, processing of grant awards, development of a QRIS database, and obtaining evaluation recommendations.
- The Pilot produced desired participant outputs in terms of number of applicants, number of grantees, and type of providers participating in the process.
- EEC created processes and materials that are viewed as valuable by the early education and care providers in the Commonwealth.
- The evaluators obtained data on levels of effort involved in the QRIS Pilot by grantees and non-grantee participants.
- EEC learned from non-participants the barriers to participation in the QRIS and perspectives on the QRIS.
- The evaluation led to better understanding of desired short term outcomes; these outcomes are listed in the logic model and include the number of programs that plan to move up in quality level.
- The evaluation demonstrated progress on desired interim outcomes. The interim outcomes, described in detail in the report, include improvements in early education and care program quality.

The full report with details follows.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Massachusetts' Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Pilot—supported through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and administered by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care was launched on March 15, 2010. The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) had formally initiated a process to develop a QRIS in February 2008. The QRIS was designed to better communicate to parents, providers, and policymakers the quality level in early education and care and out of school time/after-school settings, as well as to improve the quality of programming provided to young children by assessing programs based on a set of common standards designed to reflect requirements that lead to increasing levels of program quality. The drafting of the QRIS provisional standards has involved various national, state, and community stakeholders since its formal initiation and the Pilot test was launched in the Spring of 2010.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING QRIS STANDARDS

In 2008, the Quality Rating and Improvement System began as a developmental iterative process which included a compilation of recommendations initiated by an internal team consisting of members specializing in the following areas: special education, Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK), research, law, licensing, and budgets. This QRIS Team was then joined by the EEC Advisory Committee, which gave feedback as well as additional input. This group sought input from key stakeholders to better represent the various types of early education and care providers (e.g., school-age, family child care, center-based, public schools, etc.). During the Spring of 2008, draft recommendations for the standards were developed based on broad goals and principles that the stakeholder group wanted the QRIS to reflect. EEC worked internally to align QRIS draft standards with the newly proposed licensing regulation, the emerging professional development core competencies, and other key EEC quality program initiatives. After the draft was created, it was posted for public input in the Fall of 2009. Finally, EEC took stakeholder and public comment, provided feedback, and resolved any outstanding issues within the provisional standards (January, 2010). The provisional standards were then revised for clarity and appropriateness for measuring quality and were formally implemented in the Spring of 2010, as the QRIS Pilot. In addition, five regional forums were held between March and May to formally introduce the QRIS Pilot and the provisional QRIS standards.

EVALUATION DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) contracted with Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) to conduct an independent evaluation of the initial phase of the Massachusetts' QRIS Pilot. This phase of the QRIS Pilot includes the activities that took place between March 15, 2010 and June 30, 2010. This includes programs engaged in the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant and the QRIS Pilot-only participants and their initial experiences and perceptions regarding the first phase of the Pilot. In order to provide EEC with informative data to guide decision-making for the second phase of the QRIS Pilot activities, the evaluators conducted a formative implementation evaluation.

The second phase of QRIS Pilot activities will include the following:

- Beginning June 30, 2010, EEC will enter data from Pilot documentation into a database.
- EEC will gain understanding of the initial impact of grant funds from the Outcomes and Measures document (July 15, 2010).
- EEC will gain a better understanding of exactly how funds were spent via the Final QRIS Reporting Form (August 30, 2010).
- EEC will provide external Environmental Rating Scales reviews for programs requiring one (September-November 2010).
- All programs will be rated (December 2010).
- Standards will be revised based on evaluations and stakeholder feedback by January, 2011.

In this evaluation of the first phase of the QRIS Pilot, the evaluators collected quantitative data to evaluate the start-up and development of the QRIS Pilot including the engagement process activities from the perspective of participating providers and key stakeholders. The evaluators also collected interview data, reviewed documents, and conducted case studies of selected provider types.

A team of research, evaluation, and early education and care specialists worked collaboratively with EEC to design the initial Pilot evaluation to meet the needs of key stakeholders. The evaluation team at EDC independently collected data from Massachusetts' providers engaged in the initial phase of the QRIS Pilot as well as from non-participating programs and stakeholders involved in developing the QRIS Pilot. This report describes the implementation, lessons learned, and outcomes that were documented during the first phase of the QRIS Pilot implementation that will inform the second phase of the QRIS Pilot.

Between March 2010 and June 2010, EDC evaluators engaged in wide-ranging activities to collect the data discussed in this report. Different types of data were collected in order to document the:

- Progress toward completing desired activities and producing desired outputs
- Promising practices experienced by family child care, center-based, school-based, and out of school time providers who are participating in the QRIS Pilot
- Challenges and lessons learned by participants and non-participants
- Recommendations for future actions

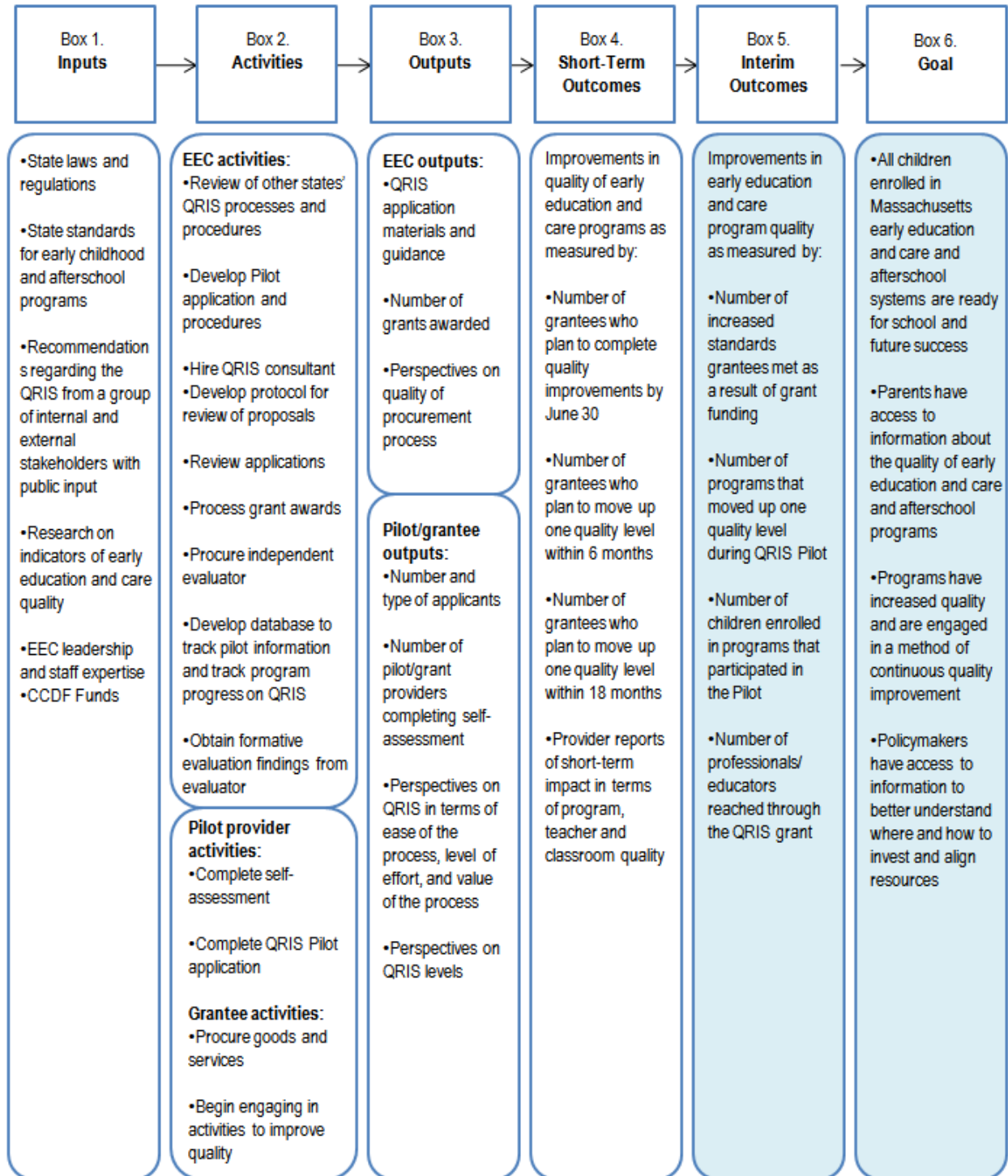
EVALUATION DESIGN

The EDC team collaborated with EEC to design an implementation evaluation. The evaluation team used a project logic model to guide the evaluation questions, design, and analysis. A logic model is a graphic illustration of the logical links between project inputs (i.e., resources), activities, outputs, and desired outcomes. As such, it represents the theory of change underlying any intervention or initiative. Below is a brief description of each component followed by a graphic presentation of the full model.

The QRIS Pilot logic model that was co-constructed by the EDC evaluation team and EEC leaders represents the QRIS Pilot ‘theory of change.’ The model—presented below—illustrates the following: QRIS INPUTS (BOX 1) such as existing laws and regulations and CCDF funds that would support specific QRIS Pilot ACTIVITIES (BOX 2). The model illustrates the planned EEC ACTIVITIES—such as developing the QRIS application materials, and PROVIDER ACTIVITIES such as applying to participate in the QRIS Pilot. In turn, these activities would result in specific OUTPUTS (BOX 3)—products that can be counted or assessed in terms of quality. The model shows the desired OUTPUTS such as the application materials and guidance and the number and type of applicants applying to participate in the Pilot. The activities and outputs would result in SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (BOX 4)—improvements in early education and care program quality as measured by provider self-reports. In turn, these would lead to INTERIM OUTCOMES (BOX 5)—such as increases in the number of providers, teachers and children affected by improved quality. Ultimately, the aim of the QRIS Pilot is to make progress toward the GOAL (BOX 6).

The EDC evaluation team designed the implementation evaluation to focus on activities, outputs, and short-term outcomes—the components of the model that are non-shaded. The model can be viewed below.

Graphic 1. Massachusetts' QRIS Pilot Evaluation Logic Model



The evaluation questions—linked with the model—are as follows:

1. Did the project implement planned activities? What were EEC staff members' and early education and care providers' perspectives regarding the quality of activities?
2. Did the project produce desired outputs?
3. What were EEC staff members' and early education and care providers' perspectives regarding the value and level of effort required to take part in these activities and produce these outputs?
4. How did participants view the QRIS? What were providers' perceptions of the QRIS steps and standards? What were providers' perceptions regarding the inclusion of the Head Start standards and accreditation?
5. How did participants view the appropriateness and ease of use of tools required for the rating process?
6. What barriers were reported? What conditions supported or impeded implementation?
7. What are the recommendations for the full-scale implementation?

EDC EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Based on the activities executed by EEC and the early education and care providers, the evaluators engaged in a series of evaluation activities. These included collaborating with EEC to develop, create, and refine the web-based survey sent to all providers participating in the grant, providers participating in the Pilot, and providers not participating in the QRIS Pilot implementation. The evaluators gathered and reviewed documents, created a database of a representative sample of grantees based on the document review, recruited participants for the web-based survey, telephone interviews, and cases studies, developed and refined the telephone and case study protocols, and coded and analyzed all quantitative and qualitative data. Vignettes describing each case study were created. A document review of the grant applications revealed a diversity of structure, formatting, length, and composition within the

Definition of Key Terms:

Grantees: All providers who applied and received a Quality Improvement Grant as part of the QRIS Pilot.

Non-grantee Pilot-only participants: All providers who either did not receive a grant but continued their participation in the QRIS Pilot or providers who did not apply for a grant but either participated or planned to participate by June 30, 2010 in the QRIS by filling out a QRIS self-assessment and a Program Improvement Plan.

Non-grantee non-participants: All providers who did not participate in the QRIS Pilot but were contacted by the evaluation team in order to include their perspective of the QRIS. These programs did not participate in any aspect of the grant or QRIS Pilot except for the evaluation surveys, telephone interviews, and case studies.

applications and attached documents. An additional EEC administrator’s focus group was added based on the EEC grant proposal review activity, which included developing a focus group protocol and analyzing the data. These data were triangulated with an additional web-based survey sent to EEC grant reviewers. An interview with the Massachusetts Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care was also conducted as well as additional interviews with key EEC personnel. Based on EEC input, a representative crosswalk of the QRIS and varying accreditation standards (such as NAEYC, NAFCC, NOA, Head Start Program Standards, etc.) along with accompanying documentation was compiled. All quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed and compiled in order to present EEC with findings and recommendations.

EDC evaluators engaged in a mixed-methods evaluation strategy to gather information to address the key questions. The key terms used in the data collection activities and findings are defined in the box on the previous page. The specific evaluation activities are presented below.

Table 1. Data Collection Activities

Evaluation Activity	Description	n
Sample	Total programs filling out “Intent to Participate”	795
	Total programs awarded grants	640
Survey	Total surveys received from early education and care providers ¹	304
	Grantee surveys	163
	Non-grantee Pilot-only participant surveys	86
	Non-grantee non-participant surveys	55
	EEC personnel (involved in grant review)	16
Interviews and Focus Group	EEC Commissioner interview	1
	EEC key personnel interviews	3
	EEC focus group (number of participants)	6
Telephone Interviews	Grantees	30
	Pilot-only providers	4
	Non-participant providers	11
Case Studies	Grantees	2
	Pilot-only providers	2
	Non-grantee providers	2
Document Review	Grantee applications	47
	Center-school based	15
	Family child care	24
	After-school/out of school	8
	EEC documents and data including but not limited to RFP, PowerPoint presentations, application materials, intent survey data	varies

¹Note. Individual surveys were filled out by the contact person listed on the QRIS grant application; this included lead agencies representing multiple programs.

To address the key questions of interest to EEC, the EDC evaluators collected quantitative survey data from the providers participating in the Pilot and qualitative interview data from a sample of participants in the Pilot. To ensure the sample size was sufficiently large to be able to analyze differences within region and across provider type (e.g., family child care, center-based care, and school-based care), a survey was sent to the programs participating in the grant as well as providers who filled out the “Intent to Participate” EEC survey. A total of 304 survey responses were received from providers and lead agencies who represented 550 providers from the target sample of 795 providers. Additionally, some respondents provided comments that they were responding on behalf of other providers within their network or agency. This group represents an additional 132 providers. This is a total of 682 providers out of the target sample of 795 providers who filled out the “Intent to Participate” or a response rate of 85%.

Working collaboratively with the EEC staff, the EDC evaluation team developed three web-based surveys: a grantees survey, a Pilot participant survey, and a non-participant perceptions survey. To address the key questions of interest to EEC, the surveys included questions that had been successfully used by the Pennsylvania STARS QRIS implementation evaluation as well as Colorado’s QRIS. These surveys include succinct and tailored questions to elicit information from program directors regarding their views of the QRIS processes and system. The data were analyzed using SPSS. Initially descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data in order to provide us with measures of central tendency including the median and the mean. The dispersion of the data including the range, standard deviation, and variance were measured. Further, the differences between groups were analyzed utilizing inferential statistical analyses including chi-square analyses and independent samples *t*-tests.

The evaluators also used a number of qualitative research methods including document review, telephone interviews, and case studies. The evaluators obtained a representative sample of providers’ grant applications and supporting documents from center-based, family child care, and after-school and out of school time providers. The interview and case study data were analyzed to uncover common themes based on grounded theory, and were coded using axial coding techniques. The key themes were then summarized. The documents were reviewed and a database was created to include the QRIS levels and standards detailing the program’s self-assessment and attached documentation. The evaluation team then developed a database to crosswalk the QRIS standards by program type, QRIS level, the standard(s) the program met, and the QRIS level and standard(s) the program intended to meet through grant funds.

Based on the initial survey responses, the document analysis, and in collaboration with EEC, a telephone interview protocol was created to gather additional information about the benefits of participating in the QRIS, the challenges of the application process, the ways in which lead agencies worked with affiliates to produce a grant application, programs’ perceptions of the QRIS standards, the level of effort needed to complete the QRIS, and whether programs had specific suggestions and recommendations for a full implementation of the QRIS. A selected sample of providers was contacted based on several criteria. Programs were first contacted based

on their program type and region so as to gain a representative sample of Massachusetts early education and care providers. Additional programs were contacted if the program replied in the survey that they would like to provide additional information, if they were a part of the document review, or if they completed the intent survey but did not apply for a grant. In addition, QRIS non-participants, those who were not a grantee or a Pilot participant, were also contacted based on program type and location. The telephone interviews were administered by the QRIS research assistants, transcribed, and coded to inform the results and recommendations.

Case study participants—those for whom the evaluation team had documents, survey data, or telephone interview data, and represented QRIS grantees, Pilot participants, and non-participants—included participants from each program standard type and represented both large and small agencies throughout the Commonwealth. Each case study is a composite of additional in-depth interviews conducted by the QRIS evaluators.

An additional component of the research included a focus group with EEC administrators. This additional component was conducted at the request of the Commissioner in order to gain an understanding of the QRIS grant proposal review process. Based on input from EEC, a focus group protocol was created to inform the questions posed to the group. The group included administrators who were knowledgeable about the QRIS grant review process and spent time reviewing applications. An additional survey was sent to all QRIS grant reviewers, which triangulated the results from the focus group and informed the grant review process recommendations.

FINDINGS

The findings are organized around the components of the logic model. The findings of the evaluation begin by presenting data on Pilot activities, next describe Pilot outputs, and follow with a description of short-term outcomes that were achieved during the Pilot. Also included are vignettes based on the case studies to illustrate key themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

This section of the evaluation report describes the EEC and grantee activities and outputs and Pilot participant activities and outputs.

EEC DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED AN AMBITIOUS PLAN TO LAUNCH THE QRIS PILOT

In the Winter of 2010, EEC staff engaged in a range of activities with the aim of launching the QRIS Pilot in the Spring of 2010. Table 2 below, QRIS Pilot Timeline and Activities, illustrates the key EEC planned activities that were successfully completed between March 2010 and June 2010.

Table 2. QRIS Pilot Timeline and Activities

Date	Activity
March, 2010	Twenty-two licensors were trained in Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) tools to support the final Pilot rating determinations—via site visits.
March 15, 2010	QRIS Pilot and Quality Grant RFP became available. Springfield QRIS Forum held.
March 22, 2010	Grantees submitted written inquiries.
March 29, 2010	EEC responded to written inquiries.
April 1, 2010	Programs completed Intent to Participate survey.
April 12, 2010	QRIS grant proposals were due. Programs submitted self-assessment and quality improvement plans. EEC began grant review process.
April 14, 2010	Lawrence QRIS Forum held.
April 28, 2010	Worcester QRIS Forum held.
April 29, 2010	Taunton QRIS Forum held.
May 2, 2010	First round of grant awards announced. Upon award grantees received grant payment.
May 15, 2010	Final round of grant awards announced.

Date	Activity
May 29, 2010	Quincy QRIS Forum held.
June, 2010	Environmental Rating Scale tool developer presented to the Board. EEC begins development of a database for tracking QRIS Pilot participants, documentation provided, and quality ratings.
June 30, 2010	Pilot application due date. Last day for goods and services to be received by grantees. EEC staff will begin documentation review from programs to determine their eligibility for ratings.

In addition to completing these activities, EEC is developing plans to conduct onsite evaluations for Environment Rating Scale (ERS) ratings beginning in the Fall of 2010, with the aim of completing these visits in October/November 2010. EEC's goal is to provide participating programs with their QRIS Rating Level by December 2010.

In June, the Board of Early Education and Care also approved that EEC allocate up to \$1.5 million dollars to fund QRIS training, monitoring (of FY 2010 grants), and program level grants in FY 2011, after the provisional standards are evaluated and updated to reflect best practices and stakeholder feedback. These training opportunities will provide early education and care providers with professional development regarding advancing their quality rating on the QRIS and are likely to begin in January 2011.

EEC STAFF REPORTED VALUE OF QRIS REVIEW PROCESS

To obtain EEC staff members' perspectives of the QRIS, EDC conducted a focus group with six key personnel involved in the QRIS, conducted telephone interviews with key EEC staff and the Commissioner of EEC, and surveyed individuals involved in the grant review process.

Staff involved in the process had varying degrees of experience with grant review processes. Of the staff completing the survey, one-half reported that they had not participated in a grant review process in the past. Moreover, only about half of the staff participating in the review process reported a solid understanding of the QRIS prior to participating in the review process.

Staff who reviewed the QRIS grant applications reported that they felt the ability to review applications within their region, without traveling to Boston, helped the process move smoothly. Others reported that the training was beneficial to ensuring that staff had a baseline understanding of the process.

EEC staff members reported a number of challenges completing the grant review process. Some noted that since the process was new, many systems were being created as the review process was being implemented. A number of individuals reported that they believed the process would operate more smoothly in the future since the systems have now been developed. A number of individuals noted that the quick turnaround time made it challenging to thoroughly review each application and also complete other required work assignments on time. Finally, some noted that the variability in the applications created some challenges. Some applications were thorough and complete whereas other applications were missing important details or were not well organized. This uneven quality was reported as a hindrance to staff attempting to systematically review a large volume of applications in a short amount of time.

Despite this challenge staff reported that the average amount of time spent reviewing each application was approximately one hour per application. Moreover, a number of individuals reported that the review process was a learning experience. Specifically, one person stated:

It was a good experience working with my co-readers and working together on making a decision and scores. (EEC staff)

Another individual said:

I believe all units should be involved in the RFP/RFR process in order to cover all aspects of what is needed and what is best for EEC administering the grants from different perspectives. (EEC staff)

Recommendations for future review processes were varied. One individual recommended more training:

I would suggest a mock review process with all reviewers ahead of time. Perhaps use old submissions in an attempt to work the kinks out and allow reviewers time to ask questions and do a few examples ahead of time. Then reviewers can do the

reviews regionally when the process is set to begin. Programs or individuals making the submissions could possibly use some hands on training ahead of time as well. There were some large differences in the submissions and programs clearly missed the mark and requested items that were not approved. (EEC staff)

Another staff member suggested recruiting early education and care providers from the community to review applications in the future:

People from the early childhood field should review proposals. (EEC staff)

Some suggested separating the content from the budget portion of the application but others noted that separating these sections could result in challenges. For example, one person noted in a focus group that while some staff members are more familiar with budgets, they might not be aware that certain materials are early childhood curriculum materials as opposed to computer hardware or software. One EEC staff member suggested possibly pairing reviewers who have budget expertise with individuals who have content expertise to address this challenge in the future.

One survey respondent's comment expressed the tone of individuals participating in the focus group and staff members who were interviewed. This individual stated:

I think everyone did great considering what has been going on in the last couple of months! (EEC staff)

EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE PROVIDERS APPLIED TO PARTICIPATE IN QRIS PILOT

On April 1, 2010 a total of 795 early education and care providers completed the Intent to Participate in the QRIS Pilot. The providers represented family child care educators, center-based program providers and after-school programs and represented providers at a self-assessed QRIS level of 1, 2, and 3¹. Of the providers who expressed an interest in participating in the Pilot, 640 applied for and received grants. Table 3 below illustrates the number and type of providers awarded grants.

The total number of programs that applied to be in the Pilot-only portion of the QRIS Pilot will be available after June 30, 2010. All Pilot-only applications are due at that time. The Pilot-only participants in this report represent those programs that indicated an interest in the Pilot on the intent to participate and self-identified themselves in survey as being in the Pilot-only (non-grantee). In addition, some Pilot-only participants self-identified as Pilot-only because they applied for a Quality Improvement Grant but were not awarded a grant.

¹ For the initial phase of the QRIS Pilot, EEC decided that programs that self-assessed at a Level 4 were not eligible for grant funding as they had no level to advance to – EEC is researching that decision for future grant rounds.

Table 3. Providers Awarded Grants by License Type, QRIS Standard Type and QRIS Level

QRIS Grantees by License Type	Number of Providers
Family child care	379
Small group	11
Large group	242
License exempt	8
QRIS Grantees by QRIS Standard Type	Number of Providers
Family child care	379
Center/school based	152
Out of school time/after-school	109
Grantee QRIS Self-Assessment Level	Number of Providers
Level 1	538
Level 2	87
Level 3	15

PROVIDERS' PRIMARY PURPOSE FOR PARTICIPATION IN QRIS PILOT TO ENHANCE QUALITY

The primary reason cited by grantees for participating in the QRIS Pilot was to learn about their program quality, however, the percentage of grantees participating in order to provide input on the QRIS was nearly as high. Conversely, the most popular reason for participating cited by non-grantee pilot-only participants was to provide input on the QRIS, followed closely by learning more about their program quality. Table 4 presents the factors cited by providers for participating in the QRIS Pilot.

Table 4. Providers' Reasons for Participating in QRIS Pilot

Factor	Grantee (n=148)	Pilot- Only (n=81)
Learn more about my program's quality	92%	90%
Provide input on QRIS	90%	91%
Learn about EEC policies regarding quality	75%	81%
Obtain observation tools	71%	69%
Receive a program rating to advertise to the public	69%	65%

The number one reason cited by grantees for participating in the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant was to enhance the learning environment. Nearly all of the grantees (95%) reported that enhancing the learning environment was a top reason for participating in the QRIS. Other reasons for participating that were cited most frequently by grantees included enhancing the curriculum and obtaining new equipment. Table 5 below illustrates the reasons grantees cited for participating in the grant process.

Table 5. Providers' Reasons for Participating in Quality Improvement Grant

Reason	Percent Grantees (n=147)
Apply for grant funds	95%
Enhance learning environment	95%
Obtain new equipment to enhance classroom environment	94%
Enhance curriculum	91%
Enhance teacher professional development	88%
Enhance assessment practices	87%
Obtain new curriculum materials	86%
Enhance parent involvement	82%
Enhance teacher/child interactions	78%
Better serve children with diverse language needs	73%
Enhance program administration	71%
Better serve children with special needs	71%
Obtain outdoor equipment	63%

Although receiving grant funds was also cited as an important reason for participating in the QRIS grant, 74% of respondents reported that they would have participated if grant funds had

not been awarded. Providers gave details about why they would participate even if funding had not been provided.

[We applied] . . . to ensure that the program was positioned to apply for grant funding since it seems likely QRIS will be linked to funding in the future (Center-based Program Director).

I believe that all programs should be rated in an equal way. As a family childcare provider people assume I just babysit, when my program is a very high quality early education program. I want a system to be in place that will rate all programs on the same standards across the board (Family Child Care Educator).

We applied in order to have input in the QRIS program. We also have an excellent program but do not have some of the items being considered "quality" and wanted to participate in the grant to help our program achieve a better rating. We were concerned that after all of the hard work we were already doing, it would not show in a rating system (Center-based program provider).

PROVIDERS REPORTED RELATIVE EASE IN COMPLETING MOST COMPONENTS OF QRIS PILOT

Grantees and Pilot-only participants reported that most components of the QRIS Pilot application process (as outlined in Table 6) were very easy or somewhat easy to complete. Table 6 below shows the percentage of respondents who reported that the component was ‘very easy’ or ‘somewhat easy’ to complete. Grantees were more likely to find components easy as compared with Pilot-only participants. For example, 94% of grantees reported that completing the intent survey was easy, compared with 77% of Pilot-only participants. On an independent samples *t*-test this difference was statistically significant. Furthermore, over three-quarters (76%) of grantees reported that using the self-assessment to determine program quality was easy, compared with only 21% of Pilot-only participants; this difference was also statistically significant. This represents Pilot-only participants on average rating the self-assessment to be somewhat difficult to complete whereas grantees on average rated the self-assessment somewhat easy to complete. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference between grantees and Pilot-only participant’s belief that it was easy to understand the QRIS grant application Request for Proposals (RFP) application process.

On average, grantees felt that the RFP was somewhat easy to understand whereas on average Pilot-only participants felt the RFP was somewhat difficult to understand. It is important to note that all of the grantees were required to complete the self-assessment as part of the grant application process. The Pilot-only participants were not required to complete the self-assessment until June 30, 2010 after this survey was closed. In addition, there were some Pilot-only participants who may have applied for the grant but did not receive it. Therefore, the Pilot-

only participants' views of the application process may have been rated as more difficult because they had more difficulty with the process than grantees who were able to complete the process and received a grant award.

Of the respondents reporting that the process was *not* easy, many cited the timeframe for submitting applications and spending grant funds as a challenge.

First, the process was too quick. I would've liked to have spent more money improving my playgrounds, but I couldn't get vendors who would ensure delivery and installment by June 30th. Secondly, there have been so many open bids, that it has been very difficult to include staff in the process, which is so important. Staff had to come to an additional staff meeting, with short notice and additional cost to our organization. (Center-based program provider)

If you were unfamiliar with the language or process of applying for grants, it could be confusing. It would have been helpful to have a one page checklist of what to send and when and to whom. The info was there, but you had to search for some of it. Also, waiting for decisions and contracts, etc. beyond the posted timelines was difficult for planning/delivery purposes. (Center-based program provider)

Honestly, I didn't feel that we had enough time to fully look at putting certain initiatives in place for the QRIS. For example, it took too long to get 3 bids back for CDA training as well as for some child assessment materials. Since we had to submit our grant proposals without them, the FCC system will have to find a way to absorb some of those costs. Money is very tight these days for all of us. Also, the state vendor list was not that easy to navigate. (Family child care educator)

Table 6. Ease of completing components of QRIS Pilot²

How easy was it to . . .	Grantee (n=141) (% reporting easy)	Pilot-Only (n=62) (% reporting easy)
Complete the Intent Survey*	94%	77%
Use self-assessment to determine program quality*	76%	21%
Learn about QRIS Pilot application	75%	66%
Develop program improvement plan	74%	NA
Complete the self-assessment	74%	50%
Complete the budget	70%	NA
Begin start up of grant activities	68%	NA
Understand the RFP*	66%	38%
Receive help from EEC regarding start-up activities	65%	NA
Receive help from EEC regarding application process	63%	NA
Understand the components of the grant application	63%	61%
Obtain quotes from vendors	49%	NA
Obtain statewide vendor list	41%	NA

*Statistically significant differences at $p < .05$ level.

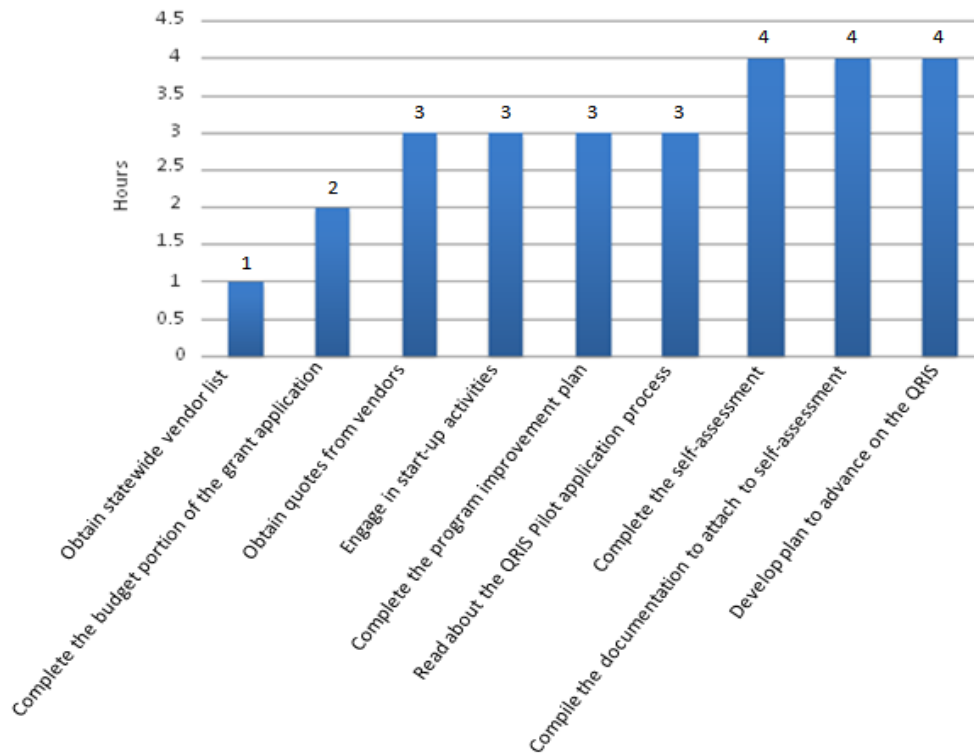
LEVEL OF EFFORT FOR QRIS PILOT VARIED WIDELY

Grantees reported that they spent a median of 39 hours on all QRIS activities but the amount of time devoted to the QRIS varied significantly—with a small number devoting less than 10 hours to the entire QRIS process and a few reporting that they spent over 200 hours. Respondents reported a number of factors contributing to the amount of time spent on QRIS activities. Some respondents reported that they were completing applications on behalf of numerous providers which may have contributed to the longer hours spent by some providers on the QRIS. However, some respondents reported that they had never completed grant applications or self-assessments before, whereas others reported having substantial experience with grant applications and self-assessments.

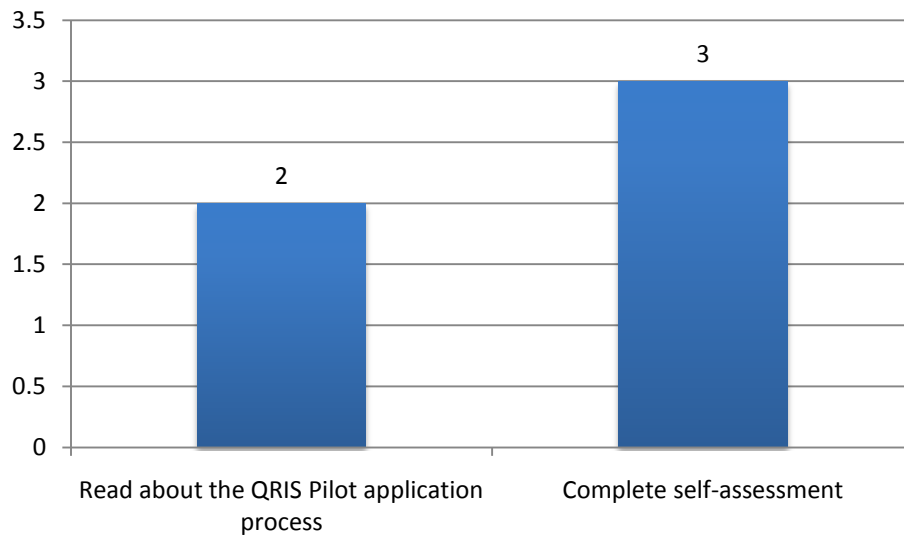
Graphic 2 below illustrates the amount of time participants reported spending on various aspects of the QRIS Pilot including applying for the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant.

² See Appendix A for a complete tabular breakdown of components by QRIS program type.

Graphic 2. Median Hours Devoted to Various QRIS Activities (Grantees)



Non-grantee Pilot-only participants reported devoting a median of 4 hours on QRIS activities. Graphic 3 below illustrates the amount of time devoted to QRIS by Pilot-only respondents. It is important to note that many respondents indicated they had not yet completed the self-assessment and therefore did not respond to this question, which might explain the lower number reported by those participating in the Pilot-only as compared with the number reported by grantees. This is not surprising however, as at the time of the evaluation survey (May 26, 2010-June 26, 2010), Pilot-only applications were not yet due to EEC until June 30, 2010 therefore Pilot-only respondents had not yet completed the self-assessment. In addition, some programs applied to be in the grant but were not awarded a grant. These programs are represented in the Pilot-only group. Therefore, some Pilot-only programs filled out all of the required forms for the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant. This included the program improvement plan.

Graphic 3. Hours Devoted by Pilot-only Participants (Non-Grantee)

One Pilot-only respondent explained how her team spent their time:

Our system had a group meeting to discuss what the QRIS is and what the Pilot was all about. Our system staff then met individually with educators over a 10-day period to complete individual self-assessments and devise individualized program improvement plans with assigned educators. (Family child care educator)

Non-participating providers also weighed in on the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant process. Some non-participating providers mentioned that they would need additional information regarding the process in order to fully understand the components of the QRIS RFP and be able to apply for a grant. Other non-participants mentioned the timing as an obstacle.

Evaluators Recommendations for Request for Proposals Process

- Allow more time to apply for the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant as well as more time to complete proposed activities.
- Decrease the amount of paperwork required for programs to submit for the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant. For example, we recommend that EEC:
 - Redesign the self-assessment template by creating a streamlined one-page checklist.
 - Allow programs to write a 2-3 page narrative describing their Individualized Program Improvement Plan.
 - Provide a checklist of appropriate documentation required for each level of the QRIS.
- Redesign the Request for Proposals following Universal Design Principles and streamlining the process.
- Reformat the QRIS website so that there are additional informational web pages that are easily accessible and clearly aligned.

The non-participant perspective of the QRIS is represented in the vignette on the next page and is a compilation of themes represented across after-school providers.

After School Program—Not Participating in QRIS

Christina Vale* founded the Best Start* after -school program in suburban Boston in 1995 and has been serving as program director since Best Start's inception. The program provides after school enrichment and care to children enrolled in Kindergarten through grade five. The program's typical daily enrollment is between 35 and 40 children. Christina has a Master's degree in Education and has been working with young children for over two decades. In addition to her role as Director of Best Start, she works for the public school district as a teacher for the enrichment program.

Since founding Best Start, Christina has worked diligently to create a quality program that would meet the educational needs of children while at the same time providing their parents with needed after school child care. She creates structured lesson plans, follows ASOST guidelines, and makes a point of hiring teachers who have degrees. At the same time, there are specific quality enhancements that she has not been able to make because the program is largely supported through private paying parents and the tuition cannot cover capital improvement, professional development, and additional curriculum expenses.

Christina was delighted to hear about the opportunity the QRIS Pilot might provide to her program. She said that she would certainly be interested in hearing more about it as she had hoped to have an independent rating of her program quality—she believes she is among the best in the town and has been told so by some parents who had moved to other schools or had moved their children to other community-based after-school programs because of the cost of Best Start. She said however, that she would not be able to apply for the QRIS Pilot because of the timing. When she heard about the Pilot she was planning a new spring curriculum, addressing staffing issues as one of her teachers had decided to move to another state—leaving an opening to fill, and sorting out year-end budgeting. She had not heard about the Pilot until the evaluation team contacted her. At that point she said it was too late in the process and she would not have sufficient time to complete the application in light of her other obligations.

Christina said that after EDC contacted her, she looked at the application and the EEC website for additional information about the Pilot. She said based on her review of the materials that she would have some difficulty with the application process. She said that she has years of experience developing and running a quality program, developing budgets, and completing various forms. However, she had difficulty following the different parts of the application—wondering about differences between the survey and parts of the application. She felt she could complete it with adequate time and with additional information from EEC.

In principle, she reported that she believed a fully implemented QRIS would benefit her program, parents and children. She said she believes it is important for program directors, teachers in after-school programs, and parents to have a shared understanding of what constitutes quality and the QRIS has the potential of bringing this about.

** all names have been changed to protect confidentiality*

MOST PROVIDERS UNDERSTAND QRIS LEVELS AND STANDARDS

Approximately three-quarters of grantee providers (78%) reported understanding the QRIS levels overall and 62% of Pilot-only providers reported understanding overall levels. When asked specifically about their understanding of what it takes for their program to advance a level on the QRIS, the percentage was quite high—90% for grantees and 77% for Pilot-only providers, however this was a statistically significant difference as measured by an independent samples t-test. Pilot-only providers on average agreed with the statement whereas grantees on average strongly agreed. Moreover, relatively high percentages of respondents reported understanding the purpose of the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) observation tools (e.g., ITERS, ECERS-R, SACERS, FCCERS-R, etc.)—82% of grantees and Pilot-only providers (See Table 7 below). [1-3]

Table 7. Understanding of QRIS Levels³

Understanding of	Grantee (n=141)	Pilot-only (n=62)
QRIS levels overall	78%	62%
What it takes for my program to advance a level*	90%	77%
The purpose of the observation tools (e.g. ITERS, ECERS-R, SACERS, FCCERS-R, etc).	82%	82%
How to use the information generated from the observation tools	82%	75%

*Statistically significant differences at $p < .05$ level.

Respondents' perceptions of the QRIS levels and standards varied by provider type and by quality level. Large centers/school-based providers were less likely to view the QRIS levels and standards as an appropriate means for measuring quality when compared with other types of providers. Nonetheless, approximately half (51% of grantees and 49% of Pilot-only participants) either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the levels and standards are appropriate.

In follow up interviews, a sample of providers expressed concerns about the appropriateness of some of the criteria related to the environment—especially providers located in older buildings. Some center and school-based providers felt that they met all measures except one, such as providing an elevator or ramp, because their program was in an old building. They said they felt they were being penalized but could not address the major capital expenditure with the QRIS grant funds.

³ See Appendix A for a complete tabular breakdown of components by QRIS program type.

Moreover, among those who felt the standards were not appropriate, a primary issue was the complexity and number of criteria. Some felt that there were too many criteria to cover, especially those who were using other quality measures in their programs, such as the NAEYC accreditation, ECERS, or CLASS. More than one provider reported that additional directions about the specific criteria that could be addressed with NAEYC accreditation or specific scores on the ECERS would be helpful.

QRIS is asking programs to duplicate efforts with a number of questionnaires, tools, etc., that are research based to measure quality. Several times it mentions contracting with an outside consultant to assist with this process. Funding is a critical component if this is to be a part of this process. Time is another issue particularly if several programs participate. Will there be enough consultants, etc. for all to access? What will be the qualifications of these individuals regarding various programs, regulations, etc.? (Center-based program provider)

Several Head Start programs [that I represent] have many of these things in place. Much of what was being asked was a duplication of effort. Example, self reflection, program improvement plans, goals and objectives, etc. (School-based Head Start director).

If NAEYC accreditation or Head Start letter is top of the qualities, it is redundant to have to completely accomplish all the steps prior. (After school program provider)

Nonetheless, over half (64%) of the respondents reported that they understand the relationship between Head Start standards, accreditation, and the QRIS standards. And, over half reported that they understand that accreditation does not automatically lead to a higher quality level. Several providers offered specific comments about the relationship between the self-assessment and accreditation.

The self-assessment process was valuable as a tool for comparison to the NAEYC accreditation. NAEYC requires 80% so this helped to focus improvement on the areas we were weakest in. It also helped to focus better on what our program could do on its own, what needed to be done with the grant money and what would need to be a long term goal for us. (Center-based program provider)

After I understood the tool, which took me a couple of readings, it was interesting how much alike this tool was to the NAEYC guidelines. I felt the tool helped to point out the weakness my program needs to work on. (Center-based program provider)

PROVIDERS REPORTED SOME CHALLENGES MEETING SOME STANDARDS

Some providers reported facing challenges regarding the QRIS workforce qualifications and professional development standard and felt that they would need additional support in order to achieve higher levels. Providers mentioned that in order to truly move up a level within this standard they would need more time to accomplish the workforce quality gains than this initial phase of the QRIS Pilot allowed. Providers suggested that they could also use more training and technical assistance around this standard in particular to increase their quality. One provider wrote:

[We could use more support around] staff guidance, training and mentoring on child interaction, and dealing with special behavior; staff training for mediation, diversity, literacy, assessment tools and problem solving techniques. (After School program provider)

Another After School program provider suggested “*more time and resources to focus on staff development and parent engagement.*”

One provider would like both training and technical assistance as well as clarification of the standards and recommendations for ways to meet them.

I would like help on developing individual professional development plans and more professional development opportunities for staff and ways to meet (this) standard.”(Center-based program provider)

A family child care educator mentioned an alternative to the college credit requirements:

Our biggest concern is how family child care educators can be included in all levels of QRIS. The degree requirement will be challenging for many and I hope that some type of portfolio system can be developed to recognize alternative learning avenues.

Evaluator Recommendations for Provider Challenges

- Include additional training and technical assistance for providers to learn more about the QRIS standards and levels.
- Widely advertise informational forums so that providers/educators are aware of these meetings.
- Offer training and technical assistance forums for providers to learn about the application process for the Quality Improvement Grant.
- Provide additional training for early education and care providers to learn more about engaging in the self-assessment process and creating an individualized program improvement plan.
- Convene additional public hearings to address providers' current concerns regarding the ability of programs to move up on QRIS standards and levels.

PROVIDERS BELIEVE OBSERVATION TOOLS ARE VALUABLE AND APPROPRIATE

The Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) of Harms, Clifford and Cryer (Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina School of Education) are observational tools used by individual programs, in state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, and by researchers in many major studies (e.g., Head Start's FACES study) to measure quality in early education and care programs. There are four (4) instruments, *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised* (ECERS-R)[2] for center-based preschool programs, *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale* (ITERS) [4]for center-based infant toddler programs, *Family Day Care Rating Scales* (FDCRS)[3] for family home day care and the *School-Age Care Environment Rating Scales* (SACERS) [5]for before and after-school programs. These scales, with sound psychometric properties of validity and reliability, assess aspects of process quality such as interaction with teachers, peers, and materials. Process quality has been cited as a critical predictor of child development outcomes. These ERS observational tools may be used by programs to meet the MA QRIS standards and advance on the QRIS.

A high percentage of providers reported that they believe the observation tools required by the QRIS are valuable—86% of grantees and 87% of Pilot-only participants. Moreover, a majority of grantees and Pilot-only participants reported believing the tools are appropriate for assessing quality levels and for their specific program types. More Pilot-only participants reported that the tools are appropriate for their program type than grantees—87% compared with 78% (see Table 8).

Table 8. Beliefs About Observation Tools

Beliefs	Grantee (n=141)	Pilot-only (n=62)
Observation tools are valuable	86%	87%
Observation tools are appropriate for my program type	78%	87%
Observation tools are appropriate for assessing quality levels	75%	73%

Providers commented on the QRIS tools and their value in assessing quality.

I felt the self-assessment was very helpful and well put together. (Family child care educator)

I found the QRIS application to be an informative way to assess my program, while at the same time offering me a sense of where to focus on improving first. (Center-based program provider)

It was helpful to have things in checklist format so that you could easily see what the next level requirements were and this helped determine what improvements were needed to achieve it. (Center-based program provider)

The self-assessment tool we found to be very valuable during the QRIS process, we were able to take a good look at the "Quality Indicators" for the desired program and ascertain clarity where we excelled and where we needed continuous quality improvement. (Family child care educator)

Completing the self-assessment is very helpful in finding out what I needed to get for my program to qualify for Level 4. (Family child care educator)

I believe that the self-assessment process encourages programs to become aware of strengths and areas for improvement and should be conducted periodically to maintain quality practices. The improvement plan provides goals and activities to be focused on to improve current practices. I also believe that the process provides commitment to the field of early childhood education and strengthens the advocacy needed to support the field. (Family child care educator)

Having a clear, well organized set of standards to follow. [It is . . .] useful in motivating educators to work on areas/topics.

Although most respondents reported understanding QRIS levels, about a quarter (22% of grantees and 25% of Pilot-only participants) reported an inadequate understanding of how to use the self-assessment template to gather needed information. Interview data revealed that respondents felt they understood how to use the checklist and observation tools but wanted

additional clarification regarding the type of documentation required by EEC.⁴ Below is a description of the range of documentation participants included in their applications and present suggestions regarding documentation requirements from providers participating in the Pilot.

DOCUMENTATION FROM PROVIDERS VARIED SUBSTANTIALLY

The amount of documentation varied from a submission of one or two pages—such as license certificate or NAEYC certificate—to more than a thousand pages of documentation. An analysis of the documentation presented revealed a lack of consistency in the level and type of documentation across provider types and QRIS levels. Providers applying for higher levels were no more likely to provide detailed documentation than providers applying for Level 1. For example, some providers at Level 1 provided only a NAEYC certification or License certification as their documentation, but many Level 1 applicants submitted as much documentation as Level 3 providers. One Level 1 applicant submitted the entire Materials Checklist in the *Early Childhood Program Standards for 3 and 4 year olds*[6], which is only required for those applying for Level 2. Moreover, one Level 2 applicant sent actual copies of sections from *The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos* to validate that its physical environment, shown through pictures provided, closely follows the curriculum.

The degree of specificity also varied. For example, some providers included copies of actual detailed and completed classroom observations or evaluation forms, while others only included blank copies of these forms. To document family involvement, some providers sent multiple documents such as parent workshop flyers, adult education class schedules, announcements for coffee hours for grandparents, brochures for fathers and family networking, and so on, while others only included an attendance sheets for parent workshops or a single parent involvement flyer.

Furthermore, although some providers inserted sample handouts used in their professional development workshops, others only provided an attendance sheet with a list of teachers who attended the workshop. Lastly, some providers submitted various translated versions of questionnaires and brochures while others only provided materials that were in English.

The following vignette is a compilation of themes from the perspective of a lead agency of family child care educators and includes recommendations for EEC around documentation.

⁴ EEC was deliberately not prescriptive in order to learn from the QRIS participants. Participants were asked to submit documents they felt proved that they met the standard/measurement. EEC will later analyze which documents are most appropriate.

Lead Agency—Family Child Care—Grantee

Jen Smith* is the Executive Director of a Lead Agency for over 40 family child care providers in northern Massachusetts. Jen's programs have been recognized as providing quality programming and she is committed to continually improving the quality of her programs. When initially working on the QRIS she felt the process itself was very valuable. She wished that she had enough time to be thoughtful and methodical about all of her family child care educators but found that the timeframe was much too quick to apply for grants for everyone. Instead, she had to choose just a sub-sample of her providers to apply for grant funds. She felt that the actual process of filling out the paperwork for the grant application was not difficult. However, for her multiple family child care sites she did feel that self-assessment was fragmented and didn't align as well with her family child care providers as it did for center-based care providers. Jen had hoped to go through the process and see her program in a new light but because of the turnaround time she wasn't able to engage in a self-assessment for all of her programs. In addition, she had trouble navigating the Massachusetts Comm-Pass site in order to find vendors that could secure the goods and services within the allotted timeframe. She did feel that the value of the activities they proposed would be very good if they could spend more time on those activities, including purchasing supplies, doing a mental health and environment assessment, engaging in the health care component and the business planning component. For the family child care educators she loved the QRIS components, but felt that she wasn't able to address all of them because of the quick turnaround timeframe.

When asked about recommendations Jen suggested that EEC have roundtable discussions with educators/providers because she felt that EEC was not going to get from the early childhood community what they wanted, not because the ECE community couldn't provide it, but because they wouldn't know exactly what EEC wanted them to provide. Rather, she suggested that a group of educators/providers could review the documents EEC will ask them to submit and provide EEC with feedback. In addition, she suggested that a future QRIS would have a longer turnaround timeframe and would include a one page checklist that programs could fill out that would include the QRIS standards so that programs could check off if they met the standards for that level. Then programs could check off what types of documentation they were providing for those levels and standards, this could include their NAEYC accreditation, ERS, Head Start Standards, or EEC program evaluation report if done within the last 6 months. She felt that there were a lot of different types of documentation that programs could provide that wouldn't require as much paperwork as was required for this QRIS round. She felt once programs had rated themselves and checked off the types of documents they were providing to meet that level, and then programs could supply a 3-4 page narrative of their program improvement plan. Overall she felt that this could be a very valuable process for family child care but that it would be very helpful to have a longer timeframe to conduct the self-assessment and to have less paperwork to submit.

PROVIDERS VALUE QRIS PILOT

Grantees, Pilot-only providers, and non-participating providers reported valuing the QRIS Pilot process. Respondents reported that learning about the Pilot process and EEC's expectations regarding quality, learning about their own program quality, and having input into the full implementation were important benefits of participation. A sample of providers' comments follow.

The process gave concrete indications of EEC quality expectations. (Family child care educator)

It was helpful to know the future quality expectations and discover where the organization falls in those standards. (After school program provider)

It is a way for After School to be looked at more as a profession. With a set of standards that are the same for everyone. (After school program provider)

Standards were clear and appropriate so I was happy with the results of the standards. QRIS standards go a little deeper [than the NAEYC accreditation standards]. I like the rules and standards and believe that we are taking it more seriously than 20 years ago. The Pilot was a really good way to get programs to read the standards (Center-based program provider).

Standards were less rigorous than the Head Start and NAEYC standards (Center-based program provider).

The QRIS standards were easier compared to the NAEYC, Head Start, and re-licensing process. There are so many criteria for NAEYC. The QRIS standards are pooled from things we already had to do for Head Start, things that we have already been doing, so it was not hard (Center-based program provider).

[The QRIS standards] were a good guide as to where the program was strong or weak. We used that as a guide and were able to focus on points to do better. The self assessment guided us as to which activities to propose for the application (Center-based program provider).

[The grant] was definitely a big help, especially now with the economy, everyone is facing difficulties. Previously it was easy to find money. Now, it is hard to find money so any grant or money is wonderful. It will definitely improve the site and program (Center-based program provider).

Non-participating providers also reported understanding the value of the QRIS Pilot and lamented not being able to participate. The following vignette is a compilation of themes heard from providers who were unable to participate in the grant or the Pilot-only portion of the QRIS.

Center-School Based Program—Not Participating in QRIS

As the director of early learning for a large school district and an advocate for early education, Marcus Aluia* reported that he was saddened that his district was not able to participate in the QRIS Pilot. The district faces many challenges that he hears are similar to other large urban districts: the school buildings are old, the district has experienced major funding cuts as a result of the recession, and the existing quality enhancements he had been able to support in the past are being cut as a result of the decreases in funding.

Upon hearing of the QRIS Pilot opportunity, he was looking forward to applying for the grant. However, the deadline coincided with other grant applications as well as the NAEYC re-accreditation deadline. As it was reaching the end of the fiscal year, he was overwhelmed by an exhaustive list of tasks. With the short notice and a quick turnaround time, he decided he could not apply for the Pilot.

In addition, the following vignette is a compilation of themes from a lead agency of non-participating family child care educators' experiences with the initial phase of the QRIS Pilot.

Lead Agency—Family Child Care—Not Participating Provider

Mary Wagner* manages 20 family child care programs, all of which have varying levels of program quality. Given the number of programs she manages, and given the short timeframe to complete the application, she did not believe it was realistic to apply for the Pilot. The QRIS application would be her first experience filling out an application that required such a large amount of documentation.

Looking over the application, she felt that both the wording of the application and the process were not clear to her. *“Many of the family child care providers I work with do not speak fluent English and I did not have the time to translate the application for each of them. Also, even some English-speaking providers in my network don’t understand some of the definitions and terms... We aren’t Head Start programs but it asks us about Head Start. We felt we needed to know about all of these other programs and we were confused.”*

Nonetheless, she felt the self-assessment would be extremely valuable. She said that the providers in her network were able to identify gaps in quality that they could address before the visits. She said they would be happy to participate in the Pilot in order to find out if they were in fact providing high-quality services.

She suggested that an in-person meeting or workshop might have helped address her questions. However, she noted that many of the providers in her network have limited time and that they would need to know well in advance when such workshops would be offered. Nonetheless, she said that if she did have the time and assistance she would have liked to apply for the Pilot.

FINDINGS REVEAL MISCONCEPTIONS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS AMONG PARTICIPANTS

The evaluation team also found a number of misconceptions among participants. Specifically, some Pilot-only providers were confused about funding related to Level 4. One center-based program provider stated, “*I assumed Level 4 implied an increase in reimbursement rate.*”

Other providers were confused about ‘exemptions’. EEC allows providers who meet all but one standard to seek an exemption. Yet, some providers were not aware of this provision. One respondent stated that she felt it was not fair to be lowered one level just because her program was unable to meet one of the requirements. Another center director reported that her program utilized a park regulated by the city as their playground. She said she felt she might not be able to meet the standard and did not know how to address the problem.

[I] would like help. . . . It would be nice to have a person I could contact for clarification of standards and ways to meet them. (Center-based program provider)

Providers also noted that the QRIS would require continuous quality improvement and a number hoped for specific support in order to ensure that the quality gains were sustained over time.

I realized going into this process that it would cost our agency additional funds to sustain the quality changes like the health care consultant requirements. (Center-based program provider)

Our program would like easier accessibility to SACCERS trainers. (After school program provider)

Through analysis of phone interviews with non-participant providers, the evaluators found that many non-participating providers either missed the application deadline or felt they could not compile all of the necessary documentation by the deadline. Some expressed their interest in participating if they had more time.

When we found out about it, it was at the end, close to the deadline. We were not going to make the first deadline so we decided not to participate this time. We are interested in it. It was just the timing we found out that we could not participate. (Center-based program provider)

Other providers felt they were not well-informed about updates regarding the application.

I wasn't happy with the application process because I felt like our program would be a good match being accredited, but we missed the deadline for one form that was added. We spent hours and days to coordinate with other staff and the

community for the best way to do it, but just because of the one form we could not apply. (Center-based program provider)

Another family child care educator applying for the QRIS grant had faced challenges during the application process. She shared how she felt that the [QRIS] website was not very user-friendly, making the application process very time consuming. She felt that the process would have been easier if there was an informational meeting⁵ which went over the application step-by-step. Although the program has gone through applications which required submission of documentation similar to those required for the QRIS application, the provider found some parts of the application still complicated because it was “a different type of job with revised standards.” The provider also suggested that the application could be simplified, eliminating any parts that seem to be repetitive.

I think that the biggest challenge was not understanding the grant process and misunderstanding what we needed to do. (Family child care provider)

Evaluator Recommendations for Provider Misunderstandings

- Streamline the number of standards within each level of the QRIS.
- Include a dictionary of terms used in the QRIS to ensure EEC and providers are all using the same terms in similar ways.
- Clarify the requirements for each standard by listing the types of criteria that are expected to meet that standard.
- Provide additional guidance about the number and types of documentation required and/or acceptable to EEC so programs understand what they must provide in order to meet the individual standards.
- Provide additional guidance regarding the QRIS Standards exemption rule for providers.
- Align the QRIS with NAEYC Accreditation standards, NAFCC, NOA, Head Start Program Standards, as well as the various Environmental Rating Scales, including providing guidance around acceptable scores (e.g., ECERS).

⁵ EEC held informational forums (see Table 2 timeline) and posted the presentation on-line.

PROVIDERS REPORT IMPACT OF QRIS PILOT ON PROGRAM QUALITY

Providers reported that the QRIS Pilot has already had an impact on program quality as they have identified gaps in their quality that they are beginning to address.

When I saw the QRIS, I thought it would be a great way to improve our center and for the professional development of our staff (Center-based program provider).

Programs have reported addressing gaps in teacher/staff professional development, curriculum needs, and gaps in the learning environment. The QRIS standards and self-assessment process was a way for providers to pinpoint some of the program quality needs that they may have overlooked. A provider shared how the application process allowed her to find those gaps.

We looked at a couple of things. What the providers needed help with across the board (e.g., health care consultant area; individual development plan; infant/toddler background). We thought we would take advantage of those activities that are in need. Also we looked at our environment (Lead Agency for family child care educators).

Another provider shared how, prior to the Pilot, ECERS was only used informally by her program as a self-assessment tool, but the incentive to move from a Level 3 to Level 4 pushed her to conduct a formal ECERS evaluation.

Although some gaps are fairly easy to address and implement with the financial support and the timeframe given, some providers stated that the timeframe created some challenges.

[The level of financial support] has helped, but if there was more time to complete the application, we may have been able to meet a higher level. (Center-based program provider)

Many family child care educators also mentioned the challenges of meeting director and teacher qualification levels. Educators perceived the gaps between the current qualifications and those addressed in the standards to be quite wide.

Definitely “director qualifications” needs to be fixed. Also it asks too much (of) assistants. No question about it. We have a high ratio of classroom teachers to children but having two degree teachers is too much. Not reflecting or respecting the lead teacher certificate. (Center-based program provider)

More academic degrees are required [in the QRIS standards]. Will there be some sort of grandfather clause for people who have been providing quality for many years and demonstrate quality in different ways? These questions will be important to think about in the future (Family child care educator).

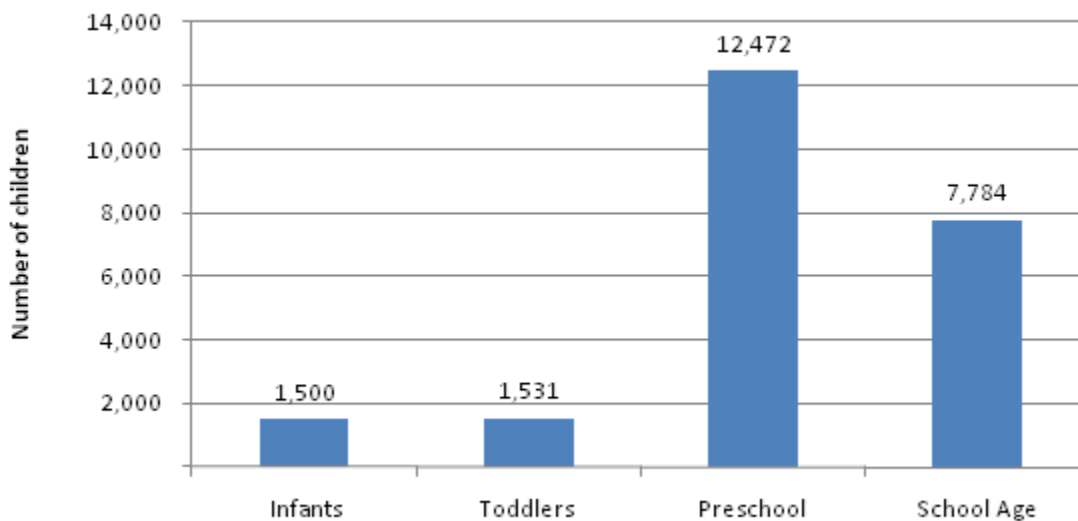
It is not only a concern for family child care educators, but also for some center-based programs as well.

Some of these preschools are in business for a long time, and asking for higher qualifications, it is difficult. It is harder to find the higher people to work for a part-time preschool (Center-based program provider).

QRIS PILOT AFFECTED HUNDREDS OF PROGRAMS AND THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

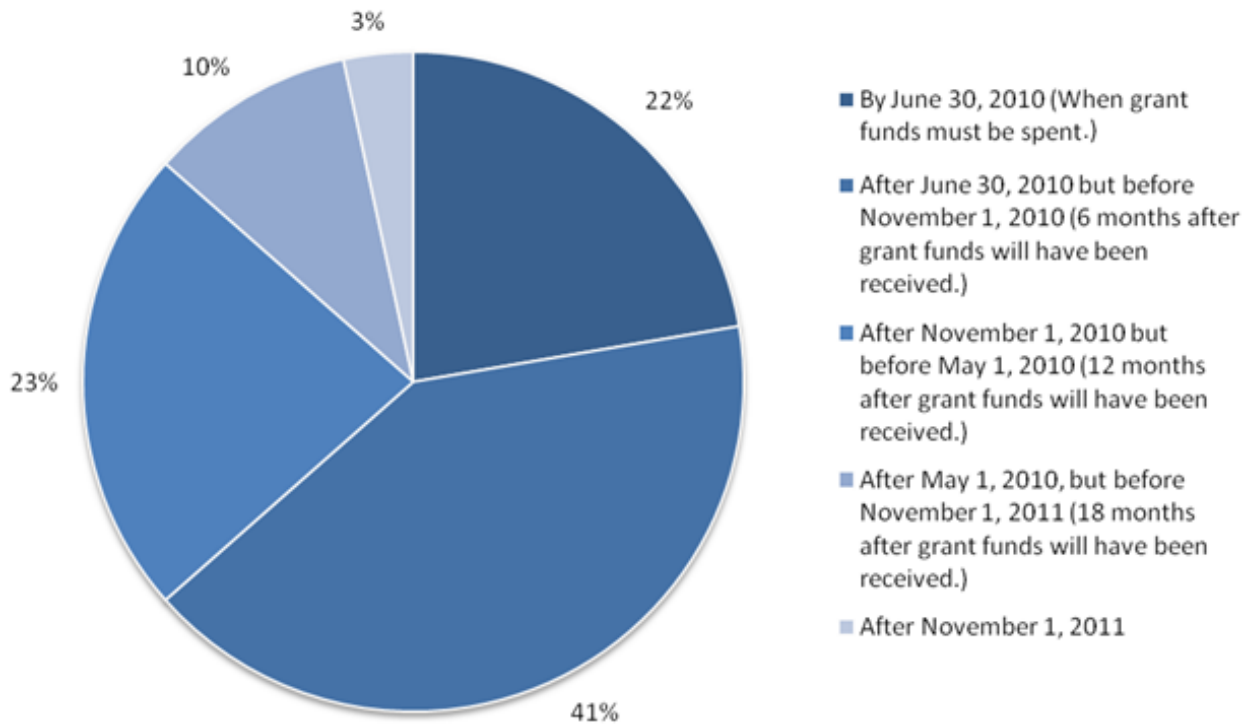
The QRIS Pilot awarded grant-funding to over 600 programs that serve 23,298 children and their families. Graphic 4 illustrates the number of children affected by programs participating in the Pilot.

Graphic 4. Number of Children in Programs Participating in QRIS Pilot



Most grantees (41%) reported that they believed they would achieve their desired QRIS level within 6 months of the grant period and another 22% felt that they would achieve their desired QRIS rating level by June 30, 2010 (see Graphic 5).

Graphic 5. Percent of Grantees Who Believed They Would Reach Their Desired QRIS Level by the Dates Indicated



RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluators have recommendations as the QRIS Pilot project moves to the second phase of implementation. In this section we summarize the recommendations that are presented throughout the report:

- Include additional training and technical assistance for providers to learn more about the QRIS standards and levels.
- Widely advertise Informational Forums so that providers/educators don't miss them.
- Offer trainings and technical assistance forums for providers to learn about the application process for the Quality Improvement Grant.
- Provide additional training for early education and care providers to learn more about engaging in the self-assessment process and creating an individualized program improvement plan.
- Convene additional public hearings to address providers' current concerns regarding the ability of programs to move up on QRIS standards and levels.
- Add to the QRIS a continuous improvement process with required updated validation visits at specific intervals.

In order to increase the clarity of the QRIS for the early education and care community, we suggest EEC:

- Streamline the number of standards within each level of the QRIS.
- Include a dictionary of terms used in the QRIS to ensure EEC and providers are all using the same terms in similar ways.
- Clarify the requirements for each standard by listing the types of criteria that are expected to meet that standard.
- Provide additional guidance about the number and types of documentation required and/or acceptable to EEC so programs understand what they must provide in order to meet the individual standards.
- Provide additional guidance regarding the QRIS Standards exemption rule for providers.
- Align the QRIS with NAEYC Accreditation standards, NAFCC, NOA, Head Start Program Standards, etc. as well as the various Environmental Rating Scales, including providing guidance around acceptable scores (e.g., ECERS).

We have specific recommendations for the Request for Proposals (RFP) process:

- Allow more time for applying for the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant as well as more time to complete proposed activities.
- Decrease the amount of paperwork required for programs to submit for the QRIS Quality Improvement Grant. For example, we recommend that EEC:
 - Redesign the self-assessment template by creating a streamlined one-page checklist.
 - Allow programs to write a 2-3 page narrative describing their Individualized Program Improvement Plan.
 - Provide a checklist of appropriate documentation required for each level of the QRIS.
- Redesign the Request for Proposals following Universal Design Principles and streamlining the process.
- Reformat the QRIS website so that there are additional informational web pages that are easily accessible and clearly aligned.

Our recommendations for the Grant Proposal Process are as follows:

- Lengthen the proposal review period.
- Recruit reviewers/readers with specific content expertise and interest in participating in the review process.
- Offer detailed training on the criteria and process to all reviewers/readers.
- Pair content area experts with budget experts to review together and assign scores.

CONCLUSION

The initial phase of the QRIS Pilot was successful in implementing planned activities, achieving desired outputs, and making progress toward desired short-term and interim outcomes. In addition, the findings and recommendations of this report may inform the second phase of the QRIS implementation.

APPENDIX A

Graphic A1. Corresponds to Table 6. Percent of grantees -- center-school based ($n=66$), family child care ($n=45$), and afterschool/out of school ($n=20$) providers indicating the level of difficulty to the following regarding the QRIS application process.

	Very Easy	Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult
Learn about the QRIS Pilot application process						
Center-School Based	15.2%	21.2%	37.9%	12.1%	6.1%	7.6%
Family Child Care	18.2%	22.7%	27.3%	22.7%	4.5%	4.5%
Afterschool/Out of School	15.0%	40.0%	35.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Understand the components of the QRIS Pilot application						
Center-School Based	6.3%	20.6%	34.9%	23.8%	4.8%	9.5%
Family Child Care	11.4%	18.2%	22.7%	34.1%	6.8%	6.8%
Afterschool/Out of School	10.0%	35.0%	35.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Complete the Intent Survey (“Survey monkey” survey)						
Center-School Based	39.4%	36.4%	18.2%	4.5%	0.0%	1.5%
Family Child Care	47.7%	36.4%	9.1%	4.5%	2.3%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	30.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Understand the Request for Proposals (grant application)						
Center-School Based	6.2%	26.2%	29.2%	20.0%	7.7%	10.8%
Family Child Care	11.9%	16.7%	35.7%	23.8%	7.1%	4.8%
Afterschool/Out of School	16.7%	33.3%	27.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Complete the self-assessment						
Center-School Based	12.3%	24.6%	32.3%	24.6%	3.1%	3.1%
Family Child Care	19.0%	31.0%	26.2%	21.4%	2.4%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	10.0%	25.0%	50.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Use self-assessment information to determine which QRIS quality rating standards to address						
Center-School Based	10.8%	24.6%	33.8%	26.2%	4.6%	0.0%
Family Child Care	11.4%	38.6%	31.8%	15.9%	2.3%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	15.0%	35.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Complete the budget portion of the application						
Center-School Based	6.2%	35.4%	30.8%	20.0%	3.1%	4.6%
Family Child Care	9.3%	11.6%	41.9%	27.9%	4.7%	4.7%
Afterschool/Out of School	5.6%	44.4%	33.3%	11.1%	5.6%	0.0%

	Very Easy	Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult
Develop your plan to advance on the QRIS						
Center-School Based	4.6%	29.2%	38.5%	23.1%	4.6%	0.0%
Family Child Care	9.1%	27.3%	36.4%	22.7%	4.5%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	5.0%	45.0%	35.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Obtain statewide vendor list						
Center-School Based	1.6%	15.6%	21.9%	21.9%	17.2%	21.9%
Family Child Care	4.7%	16.3%	14.0%	27.9%	23.3%	14.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	0.0%	26.3%	21.1%	21.1%	15.8%	15.8%
Obtain quotes from vendors						
Center-School Based	6.3%	17.2%	23.4%	21.9%	17.2%	14.1%
Family Child Care	7.1%	21.4%	19.0%	26.2%	16.7%	9.5%
Afterschool/Out of School	10.5%	26.3%	15.8%	21.1%	21.1%	5.3%
Begin start up grant activities						
Center-School Based	3.1%	23.4%	39.1%	26.6%	3.1%	4.7%
Family Child Care	7.3%	24.4%	41.5%	24.4%	2.4%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	5.3%	52.6%	10.5%	15.8%	15.8%	0.0%
Receive help from EEC regarding the QRIS Pilot application process						
Center-School Based	11.5%	19.7%	27.9%	11.5%	16.4%	13.1%
Family Child Care	9.3%	18.6%	34.9%	25.6%	9.3%	2.3%
Afterschool/Out of School	5.3%	31.6%	31.6%	21.1%	5.3%	5.3%
Receive help from EEC regarding start up activities						
Center-School Based	4.9%	27.9%	31.1%	11.5%	13.1%	11.5%
Family Child Care	9.3%	18.6%	30.2%	30.2%	9.3%	2.3%
Afterschool/Out of School	5.3%	31.6%	31.6%	21.1%	5.3%	5.3%

Graphic A2. Corresponds to Table 6. Percent of Pilot-only -- center-school based (N=31), family child care (n=10), and afterschool/out of school (n=14) providers indicating the level of difficulty to the following regarding the QRIS application process.

	Very Easy	Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	NA
Learn about the QRIS Pilot application process							
Center-School Based	38.7%	29.0%	19.4%	9.7%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Family Child Care	10.0%	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	0.0%	7.7%	30.8%	23.1%	15.4%	15.4%	7.7%
Understand the components of the QRIS Pilot application							
Center-School Based	12.9%	25.8%	41.9%	12.9%	3.2%	3.2%	0.0%
Family Child Care	10.0%	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	0.0%	7.7%	30.8%	23.1%	23.1%	7.7%	7.7%
Complete the Intent Survey (“Survey monkey” survey)							
Center-School Based	36.7%	33.3%	13.3%	10.0%	0.0%	3.3%	3.3%
Family Child Care	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	28.6%	50.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%
Understand the Request for Proposals (grant application)							
Center-School Based	6.7%	13.3%	26.7%	23.3%	10.0%	13.3%	6.7%
Family Child Care	10.0%	30.0%	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	30.8%	38.5%	15.4%	0.0%
Complete the self-assessment							
Center-School Based	6.5%	22.6%	38.7%	16.1%	9.7%	3.2%	3.2%
Family Child Care	0.0%	10.0%	50.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	35.7%	14.3%	7.1%	14.3%
Receive help from EEC regarding the QRIS Pilot application process							
Center-School Based	7.1%	14.3%	14.3%	17.9%	14.3%	7.1%	25.0%
Family Child Care	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	30.0%	0.0%	40.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	41.7%	8.3%	8.3%	33.3%

Graphic A3. Corresponds to Table 7. Percent of grantees -- center-school based (n=65), family child care (n=42), and afterschool/out of school (n=20) providers indicating the level of agreement to the following regarding the QRIS standards.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I understand what it takes to move up a level.					
Center-School Based	36.9%	52.3%	9.2%	0.0%	1.5%
Family Child Care	45.2%	42.9%	9.5%	2.4%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	55.0%	35.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I understand the purpose of the observation tools (ITERS, ECERS-R, SACERS, etc.)					
Center-School Based	36.9%	40.0%	12.3%	4.6%	6.2%
Family Child Care	31.0%	54.8%	11.9%	2.4%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	45.0%	40.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I believe the observation tools are valuable.					
Center-School Based	35.9%	43.8%	14.1%	3.1%	3.1%
Family Child Care	48.8%	43.9%	4.9%	2.4%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	30.0%	55.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I have adequate knowledge about how to use the observation tools in order to collect the needed information.					
Center-School Based	25.0%	50.0%	14.1%	9.4%	1.6%
Family Child Care	31.0%	50.0%	9.5%	9.5%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	36.8%	47.4%	5.3%	10.5%	0.0%
I have adequate knowledge about how to use the information generated from the observation tolls.					
Center-School Based	22.2%	55.6%	14.3%	6.3%	1.6%
Family Child Care	33.3%	54.8%	4.8%	7.1%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	31.6%	57.9%	0.0%	10.5%	0.0%
I believe the observation tools are appropriate for my program type.					
Center-School Based	24.3%	48.4%	20.3%	4.7%	3.1%
Family Child Care	43.9%	41.5%	12.2%	0.0%	2.4%
Afterschool/Out of School	26.3%	52.6%	21.2%	0.0%	0.0%
I believe the observation tolls are appropriate for assessing quality.					
Center-School Based	21.9%	50.0%	17.2%	7.8%	3.1%
Family Child Care	38.1%	45.2%	14.3%	2.4%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	27.8%	44.4%	16.7%	11.1%	0.0%

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe the QRIS levels are appropriate.					
Center-School Based	15.9%	34.9%	25.4%	19.0%	4.8%
Family Child Care	31.0%	23.8%	31.0%	9.5%	4.8%
Afterschool/Out of School	15.8%	36.8%	21.1%	21.1%	5.3%
I adequately understand the differences in the QRIS levels.					
Center-School Based	25.0%	45.3%	21.9%	4.7%	3.1%
Family Child Care	33.3%	47.6%	9.5%	9.5%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	36.8%	47.4%	15.8%	0.0%	0.0%

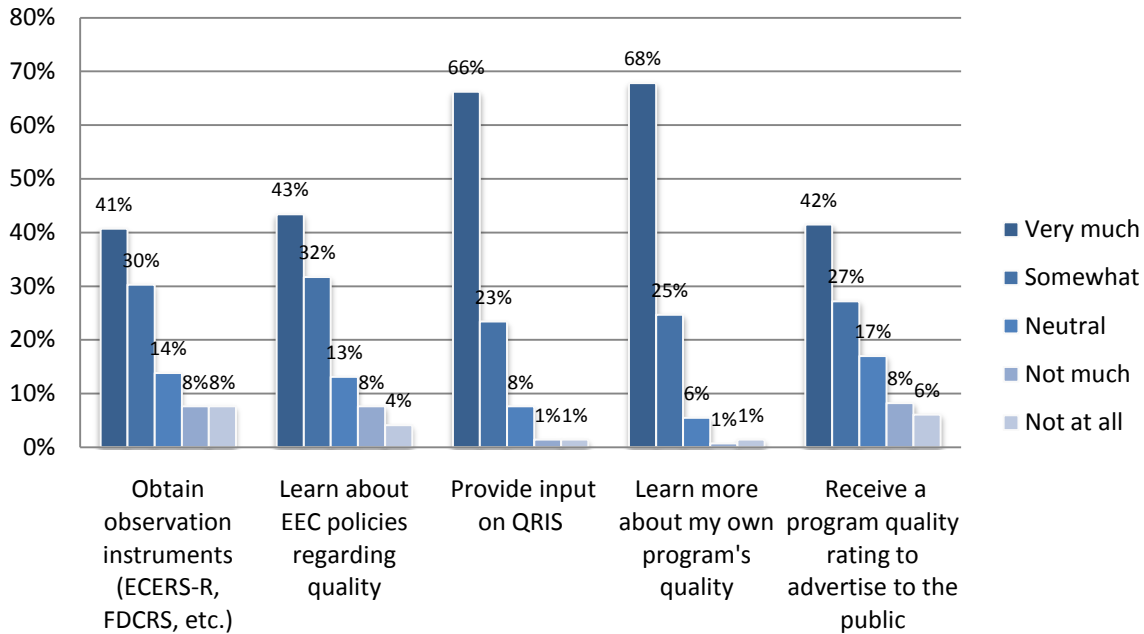
Graphic A4. Corresponds to Table 7. Percent of center-school based (n=30), family child care (n=10), and afterschool/out of school (n=14) Pilot-only providers indicating the level of agreement to the following regarding the QRIS standards.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I understand what it takes to move up a level.					
Center-School Based	46.7%	40.0%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Family Child Care	30.0%	50.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	7.7%	30.8%	38.5%	23.1%	0.0%
I understand the purpose of the observation tools (ITERS, ECERS-R, SACERS, etc.)					
Center-School Based	56.7%	36.7%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Family Child Care	30.0%	60.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	7.1%	42.9%	28.6%	21.4%	0.0%
I believe the observation tools are valuable.					
Center-School Based	56.7%	36.7%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Family Child Care	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	23.1%	38.5%	38.5%	0.0%	0.0%
I have adequate knowledge about how to use the observation tools in order to collect the needed information.					
Center-School Based	48.3%	41.4%	10.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Family Child Care	30.0%	20.0%	40.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	7.7%	38.5%	15.4%	23.1%	15.4%
I have adequate knowledge about how to use the information generated from the observation tools.					
Center-School Based	50.0%	46.7%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Family Child Care	20.0%	50.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	0.0%	30.8%	38.5%	15.4%	15.4%

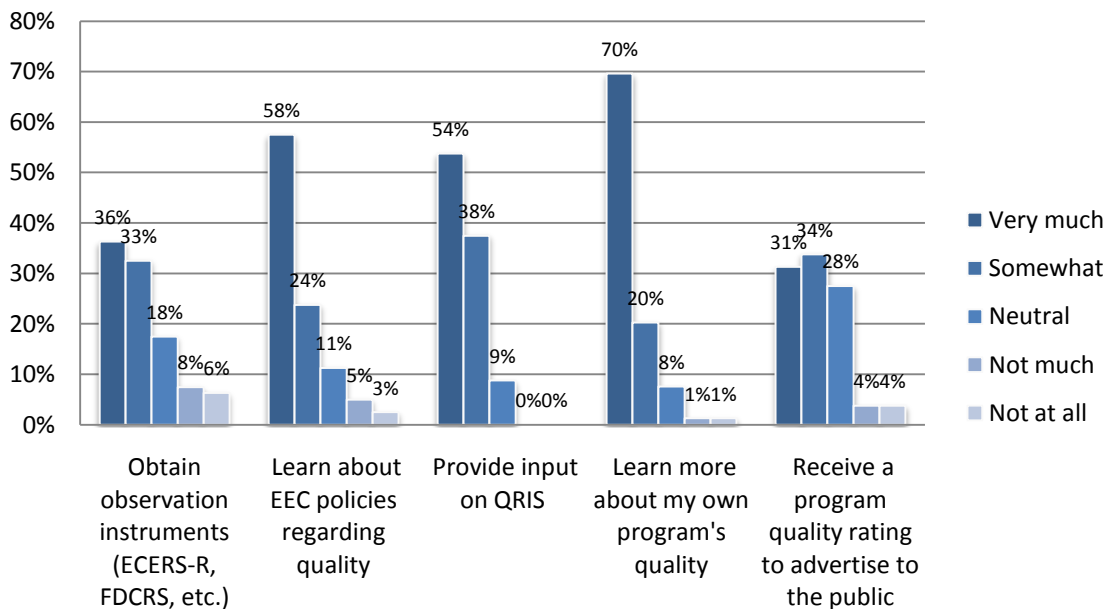
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe the observation tools are appropriate for my program type.					
Center-School Based	53.3%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Family Child Care	20.0%	70.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	16.7%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	8.3%
I believe the observation tolls are appropriate for assessing quality.					
Center-School Based	46.7%	30.0%	23.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Family Child Care	10.0%	80.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	18.2%	27.3%	45.5%	0.0%	9.1%
I believe the QRIS levels are appropriate.					
Center-School Based	17.2%	27.6%	31.0%	17.2%	6.9%
Family Child Care	0.0%	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	0.0%	15.4%	30.8%	46.2%	7.7%
I adequately understand the differences in the QRIS levels.					
Center-School Based	41.4%	24.1%	27.6%	3.4%	3.4%
Family Child Care	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Afterschool/Out of School	7.7%	30.8%	30.8%	23.1%	7.7%

APPENDIX B

B.1 The percentage of grantee providers indicating the degree to which the following factors influenced their decision to participate (n=148)



B.2 The percentage of Pilot-only providers indicating the degree to which the following factors influenced their decision to participate (n=81)



B.3 Corresponds to Table 6. The percentage of grantee providers indicating the level of difficulty of the following regarding the QRIS Pilot application (n=143)

	Very Easy	Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult
Learn about the QRIS Pilot application process	19.0%	23.9%	32.4%	14.8%	4.9%	4.9%
Understand the components of the QRIS grant application	10.1%	23.0%	30.2%	25.2%	4.3%	7.2%
Complete the Intent Survey ("Survey monkey" survey)	46.1%	34.8%	13.5%	3.5%	1.4%	0.7%
Understand the Request for Proposals (grant application)	9.6%	26.7%	29.6%	20.7%	5.9%	7.4%
Complete the self-assessment	13.8%	29.0%	31.2%	21.0%	3.6%	1.4%
Use self-assessment information to determine which QRIS quality standards to address	10.6%	33.3%	31.9%	19.9%	4.3%	0.0%
Complete the budget portion of the application	7.4%	28.1%	34.8%	20.0%	5.9%	3.7%
Develop your plan to advance on the QRIS	6.5%	31.2%	36.2%	20.3%	5.1%	0.7%
Obtain statewide vendor list	4.4%	17.0%	20.0%	22.2%	17.8%	18.5%
Obtain quotes from vendors	7.6%	20.5%	21.2%	22.0%	17.4%	11.4%
Begin start up grant activities	4.5%	28.6%	34.6%	22.6%	6.8%	3.0%
Receive help from EEC regarding the application process	9.2%	22.1%	32.1%	17.6%	11.5%	7.6%
Receive help from EEC regarding start up activities	6.2%	26.2%	32.3%	18.5%	10.0%	6.9%

B.4 Corresponds to Table 6. The percentage of Pilot-only providers indicating the level of difficulty of the following regarding the QRIS Pilot application (n=68)

	Very Easy	Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	NA
Learn about the QRIS Pilot application process	20.9%	19.4%	25.4%	19.4%	6.0%	6.0%	3.0%
Understand the components of the QRIS Pilot application	9.0%	17.9%	34.3%	20.9%	7.5%	6.0%	4.5%
Complete the Intent Survey ("SurveyMonkey" survey)	30.8%	33.8%	12.3%	13.8%	0.0%	3.1%	6.2%
Understand the Request for Proposals (grant application)	4.5%	12.1%	21.2%	24.2%	16.7%	15.2%	6.1%
Complete the self-assessment	2.9%	17.6%	29.4%	27.9%	10.3%	4.4%	7.4%
Receive help from EEC regarding the QRIS Pilot application process	4.8%	8.1%	8.1%	25.8%	12.9%	6.5%	33.9%

B.5 Corresponds to Table 7. The percentage of grantee providers indicating their agreement to the following regarding the QRIS standards (n=141)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I understand what it takes to move up a level	42.6%	47.5%	8.5%	0.7%	0.7%
I understand the purpose of the observation tools (ITERS, ECERS-R, SACERS, etc.)	36.2%	45.4%	12.1%	3.5%	2.8%
I believe the observation tools are valuable	41.0%	44.6%	10.8%	2.2%	1.4%
I have adequate knowledge about how to use the observation tools in order to collect the needed information	30.9%	46.8%	12.2%	9.4%	0.7%
I have adequate knowledge about how to use the information generated from the observation tools	29.0%	52.9%	10.1%	7.2%	0.7%
I believe the observation tools are appropriate for my program type	31.2%	46.4%	17.4%	2.9%	2.2%
I believe the observation tools are appropriate for assessing quality levels	26.8%	48.6%	15.9%	7.2%	1.4%
I believe the QRIS levels are appropriate	20.3%	31.2%	24.6%	19.6%	4.3%
I adequately understand the differences in the QRIS levels	28.1%	49.6%	15.1%	5.8%	1.4%

B.6 Corresponds to Table 7. The percentage of Pilot-only providers indicating their agreement to the following regarding the QRIS standards (n=62)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I understand what it takes to move up a level	32.8%	44.3%	16.4%	6.6%	0.0%
I understand the purpose of the observation tools (ITERS, ECERS-R, SACERS, etc.)	38.7%	43.5%	12.9%	4.8%	0.0%
I believe the observation tools are valuable	44.3%	42.6%	13.1%	0.0%	0.0%
I have adequate knowledge about how to use the observation tools in order to collect the needed information	33.3%	38.3%	18.3%	6.7%	3.3%
I have adequate knowledge about how to use the information generated from the observation tools	31.1%	44.3%	16.4%	4.9%	3.3%
I believe the observation tools are appropriate for my program type	36.7%	50.0%	11.7%	0.0%	1.7%
I believe the observation tools are appropriate for assessing quality levels	32.2%	40.7%	23.7%	0.0%	3.4%
I believe the QRIS levels are appropriate	10.2%	35.6%	27.1%	22.0%	5.1%
I adequately understand the differences in the QRIS levels	26.7%	35.0%	25.0%	10.0%	3.3%

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