

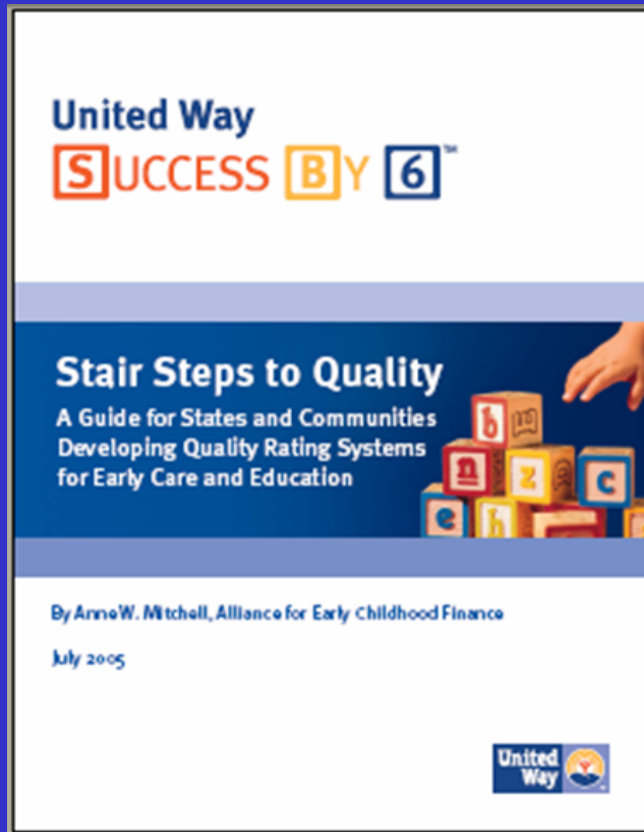
Quality Rating & Improvement Systems

*Powerful Policy for Improving
and Unifying Early Care and
Education*

Anne Mitchell
Early Childhood Policy Research

Melinda Myers
Best Beginnings: Alaska's Early
Childhood Investment

A Guide for States and Communities Developing QRS



- Designed as a hands-on, practical resource
- Organized as a planning tool to use as States consider how to develop a new QRS or improve an existing one
- Outlines the common elements and State and community examples

Financing QRIS

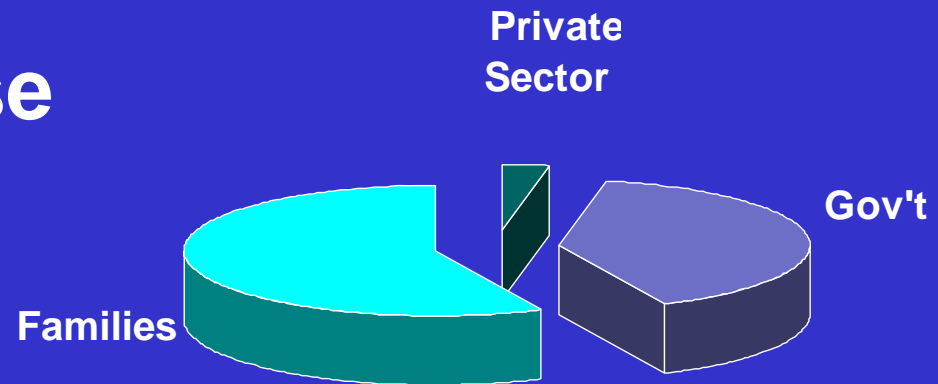


Designed to provide guidance on QRIS funding, including:

- Planning
- Administration
- Technical Assistance
- Financial Supports and Incentives for programs and practitioners
- Engagement & Outreach

Early Care & Education is a Market-Driven System

- Providers offer services for a price
- Consumers choose and pay
- Tuition is the largest source of revenue

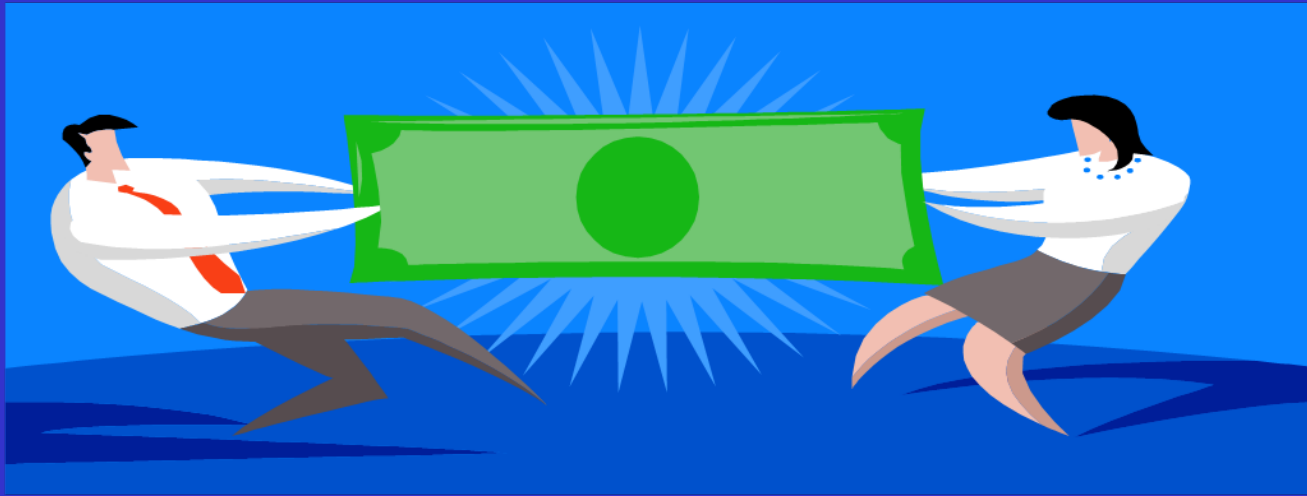




EC&E is a Unique Market Sector

(serves both public & private needs)

- **Enables parents to work (private)**
- **Prepares children for school & life (public)**
- **Enhances productivity of educational system (public)**
- **Strengthens future workforce (public)**



Good Outcomes = Higher Standards

Higher Standards = Higher Costs

Higher Costs = Higher Prices

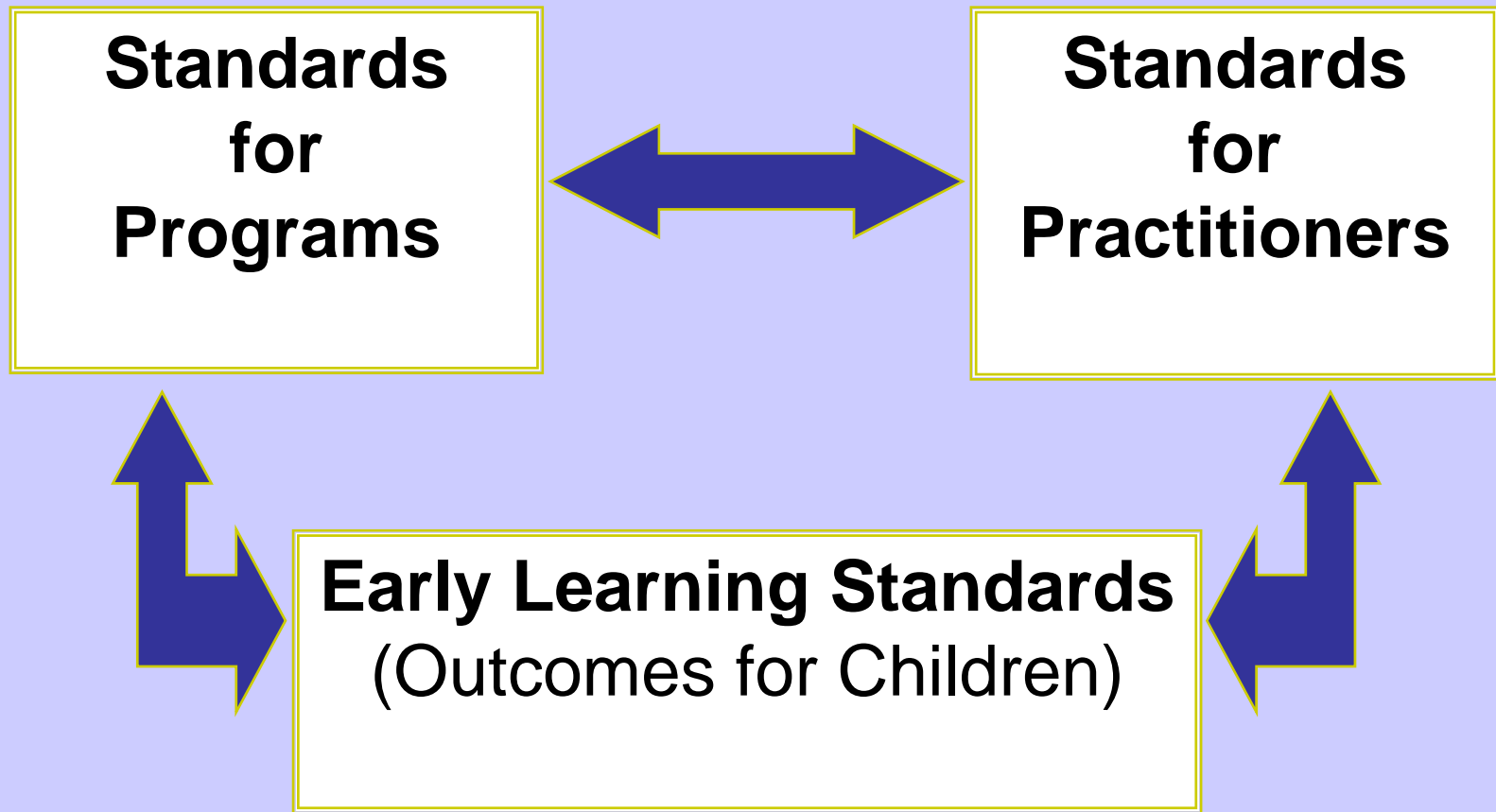
**When consumers pay most of the bill,
the result is CONFLICT!**



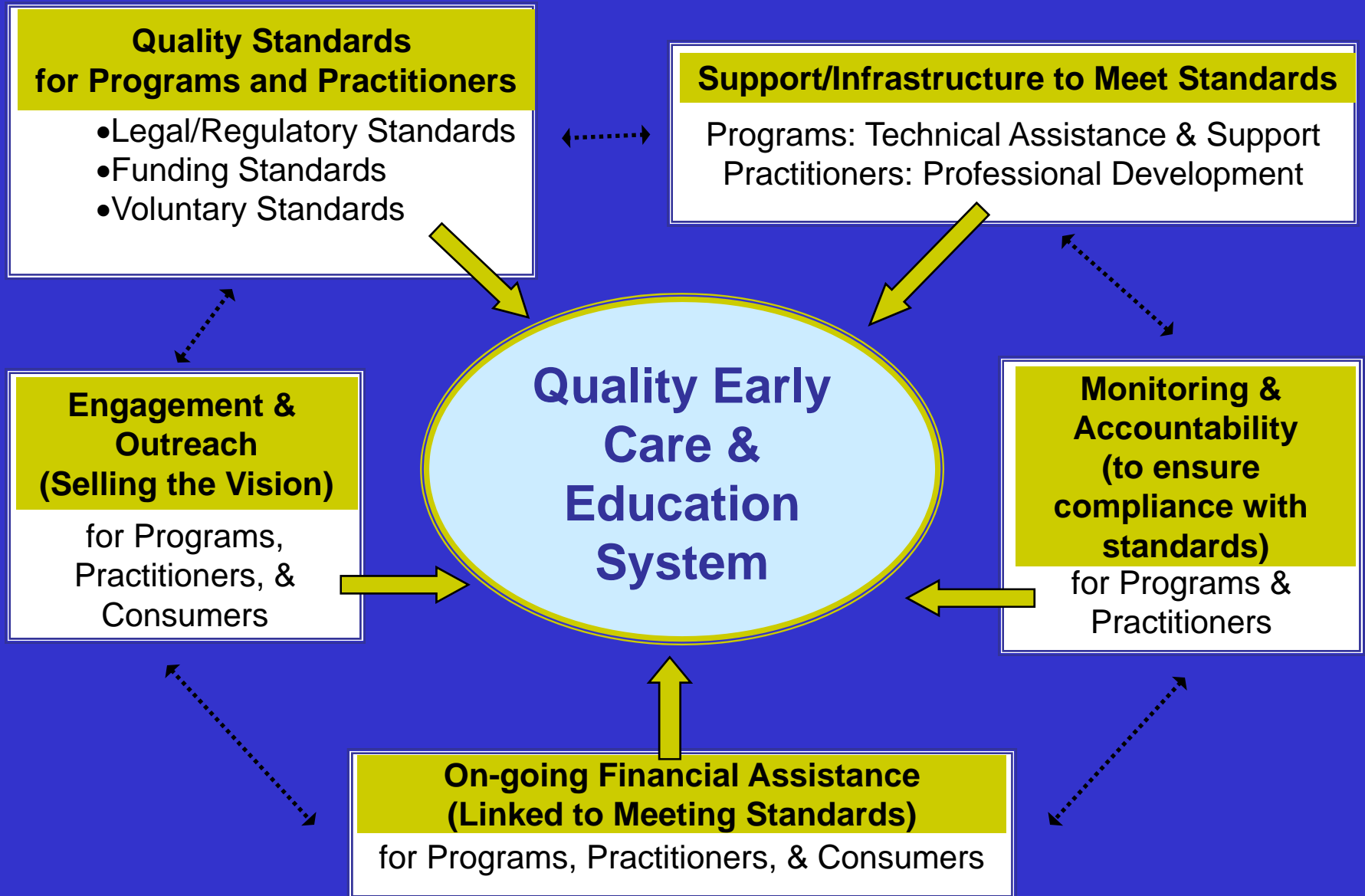
QRIS is EC&E Market Intervention

1. Quality Assurance – standards, assessment & monitoring
2. Supply side interventions – program and practitioner supports (TA and PD) and financial incentives
3. Demand side interventions – ratings, consumer education and financial incentives

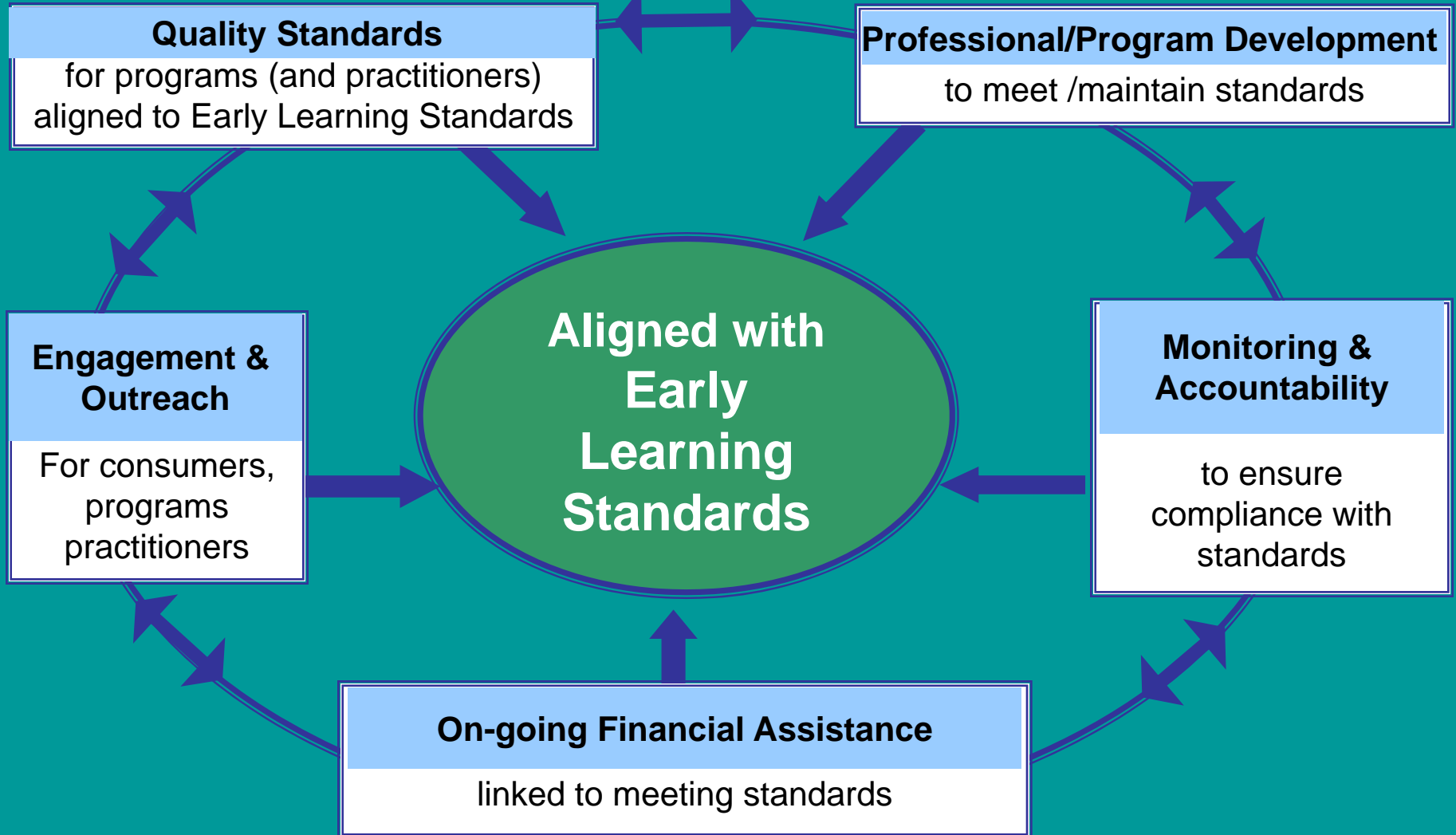
Common ECE Standards



A Standards-Based ECE System Design



QRIS = the Framework for the Early Care and Education System



Alaska's Early Learning System

**Developed by the System for Early Education Development
(SEED) QRIS Committee, December 2007*

Alaska's Early Learning System

In the Home Parent Support

Home Visiting
Resource Centers
Literacy Programs
Informal Community Supports
Classes
Online Resources
Early Intervention

Away From Home Early Care & Education System

Certified Preschools
Child Care Centers
Child Care Homes
Head Start
School District
Preschools

A Standards-Based Early Care and Education System (aka: Alaska's QRIS)

**Developed by the System for Early Education Development (SEED) QRIS Committee, December 2007*

Head Start Certified Preschool



School District Preschools

Licensed or Military Child Care Centers or Homes



The Five Common Elements of a QRIS

1. Standards
2. Accountability (assessment & monitoring)
3. Program and practitioner outreach and support
4. Financial incentives specifically linked to compliance with quality standards
5. Family/consumer education



Common Standards Categories

- **Staff Qualifications & Professional Development**
- **Environment**
- **Curriculum and Learning**

Included in most QRIS and backed by research





Common Standards Categories

- Family Engagement
- Leadership and Management

Included in many QRIS

Research available but not as strong





National Accreditation and QRIS

In all but 1 state QRIS, accreditation is:

- **the highest rating (top level), or**
- **accreditation + extra criteria is top level, or**
- **accreditation is one way to reach the top level, or**
- **In points system, accreditation = points.**



Supply Side: Program and Practitioner Support

- **Technical assistance**
- **Professional development**
- **Financial incentives**





Supply Side: Financial Incentives


- Grants, bonuses and awards
- Scholarships
- Wage supplements
- Tax credits for ECE programs, practitioners and investors

All linked to QRIS levels



Demand Side: Financial Incentives

- Tiered reimbursement rates (or other 3rd party tuition subsidy)
- Tax credits – higher, refundable state income tax credits for parents (DCTC)



Consumer Engagement: a demand-side strategy

- Symbols - establish a QRIS indicator (usually star) as a consumer guide
- Education and Outreach – ensure that consumers, funders, practitioners, the general public understand QRIS symbols and rating system
- Multi-faceted – communication in any forms; many messengers

Affecting consumer behavior helps improve the system!






Broad Participation is Key to Effective Demand

- All states include child care centers and family child care homes
- Most include school-age programs and Head Start
- Some QRIS include Pre-K in public schools
- None include unregulated family, friend, and neighbor care (yet)

High participation (among the many types of programs parents use) is key to success!



Typical QRIS Standards Structure

	Center-based Standards	Home-based Standards
<i>Qualifications</i>		
<i>Curriculum & Learning</i>	Infant-toddler Preschool School-age	Infant-toddler Preschool School-age
<i>Management</i>		





Do QRIS work?

- **Yes!**
- **Quality is improving**
- **Better child outcomes in higher quality centers (NC)**
- **Evaluations in NC, OK, PA and TN**





The Process of Developing QRIS

- Alaska's process
- What worked
- The challenges
- Next steps

Summary

QRIS is:

- an accountability system
- a framework to unify sectors of ECE system
- a finance strategy that addresses market failures
- a fast growing trend

It's a SYSTEM!



Lessons Learned

- **Make it simple**
- **Make it dynamic**
- **Align with child outcomes**
- **Start when there's funding**

