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For more information about QRIS,
 visit www.del.wa.gov/care/qriscare/default.aspx

What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System?

The Washington Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is our state’s voluntary program for helping licensed child care providers offer high-quality care. Child care providers who participate are rated at level one through five.



Washington’s quality standards are based on a two-year field test and national research. Washington is one of the few states that has a standard devoted specifically to promoting child outcomes and emphasizes the importance of effectively engaging and partnering with families.

The standards are one part of the QRIS “model,” which DEL and partners are developing during FY2012. The model will include an explanation/guidance of how the standards can be met, tools and templates to assist with meeting specific standards, a training calendar, and developing a QRIS database.

What was the field test?

During a successful two-year field test administered by our partners at Thrive by Five Washington, we learned a great deal about how to define and measure child care quality, the incentives and supports necessary to assist a child care providers in improving the quality of care offered to children and families and the importance of using existing partnerships to build a system that is sustainable, accountable and nimble.

The field test took place in five communities — White Center, East Yakima; and Spokane, Clark and Kitsap counties — at more than 86 licensed child care programs. The licensees received coaching, professional development and incentives.

Phase One: Infrastructure

In fiscal year 2012, DEL has moved forward with the following infrastructure, which is common to most QRIS around the nation.

- Q (Quality)** —> All agencies promote child care quality.
- R (Rating)** —> The University of Washington (UW) is the lead agency for evaluation, assessment and rating assignment
- I (Improvement)** —> The Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network is the lead agency for coordinating improvement activities including coaching, technical assistance, professional development and training
- S (System)** —> DEL is the lead administrative agency for systems development and integration

Early Adopters

In August 2011, we selected 50-plus early adopters from the field test participants to continue the first QRIS efforts in our state. Early adopters are from:

- Clark County: 17 facilities
- Kitsap County: 7 facilities
- Spokane County: 14 facilities
- White Center: 15 facilities
- East Yakima: 11 facilities

Phase Two

In December 2012, Washington was named one of nine winners of the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant of up to \$60 million over four years. DEL will expand QRIS statewide through 2014. DEL expects to publish the first QRIS ratings in late 2012.