

Innovations in Measuring Quality of Early Childhood Education Across Settings  
Project/Department Descriptions Handout

**Kerry Hofer, Abt Associates: *Early Learning Study @ Harvard (ELS@H)***

The *Early Learning Study at Harvard*, or [ELS@H](#), is a first-of-its-kind, statewide assessment of the learning of young children in Massachusetts in the context of the range of early learning settings where they spend time. The study is a critical focus of the *Saul Zaentz Early Education Initiative* at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, who is partnering with Abt Associates to carry out this longitudinal study. Across its now three years of observation data collection in early care providers across the state, the project in part aims to use innovative measurement approaches – assessed at the adult and child level – across multiple settings and age ranges in early care and education, including community center-based providers, Head Start programs, licensed family child care providers, public pre-kindergarten classrooms, kindergarten/1st grade classrooms in public and private schools, and parents and unlicensed informal providers as well. Dr. Hofer will discuss the use of various quality measures in the ELS@H study.

**Randy Hudgins, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)**

Georgia uses a wide range of quality measures for different purposes. We use the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) as part of the star-rating in our QRIS. Georgia included CLASS, LENA, and COP/TOP in our QRIS Validation study which included looking at links between star-rating and work climate. We regularly use CLASS for program improvement and evaluation of our state pre-k program and have incorporated CLASS and LENA into our efforts to improve language/literacy in infant/toddler classrooms. Along with these measures, we often use administrative data including child care licensing information and subsidy data to contextualize quality across settings.

**Michelle Maier, MDRC: *Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (VIQI)***

Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions, or [VIQI](#), aims to build evidence about how different dimensions or features of classroom quality support children’s learning. VIQI will do this by testing two curricula and professional development approaches – Creative Curriculum and Connect4Learning, each with enhanced professional development that includes teacher training and ongoing coaching. Both approaches are designed to promote children’s learning and skills in school readiness, including language, pre-literacy, math, science and social-emotional learning. Participating ECE programs will be randomly assigned to receive one of the enhanced curricular and professional development approaches or to continue with their usual curriculum and professional development. We will collect detailed information on the following three dimensions of quality across multiple days of classroom observations: (1) structural quality—structural or physical aspects of how ECE classrooms are set up (e.g., availability of materials, arrangement of furniture); (2) interactional quality—the extent to which the classroom climate is positive, responsive, and predictable; and (3) instructional quality—what is being taught (e.g., skill domains, content) and how that information is being taught, including what instructional moves teachers use (e.g., asking open-ended questions, engaging in sustained discussions) and what activity settings are used (e.g., whole group, small group).

VIQI is a multi-year project that is being conducted in two key phases. The first phase launched in summer of 2018 and entailed a small, year-long pilot study across three localities to inform the implementation and feasibility of a full-scale study. The full-scale phase is launching in the summer of 2021 across multiple localities in partnership with Head Start and community-based ECE providers serving 3- and 4-year-olds. Lessons learned from VIQI will be used to inform research, policy and programmatic improvements in ECE across the nation.

**Sarah Neville-Morgan / Erica Otono, California Dept of Education's Opportunities for All Branch and Early Learning and Care Division**

Quality Counts California (QCC), the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), is a systematic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality and supports in early learning and care settings, regardless of licensure. QCC includes sites across the entire mixed-delivery system from family, friend and neighbor to center-based state preschool and Head Start. While it does include a rating system, its purpose is to support an overarching framework for continuous quality improvement. The rating process uses multiple criteria (7 elements) to evaluate early learning sites according to a matrix of structural and process quality standards and that are used to produce quality tier ratings. The seven QCC elements are (1) child observation, (2) developmental and health screenings, (3) lead teacher qualifications, (4) teacher-child interactions using the CLASS assessment (Pianta et al., 2008), (5) ratios and group size, (6) preschool environment rating using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998), and (7) director qualifications. Each element on the matrix contains a range of points from 1–5 that can be achieved when a program meets the criteria for a graduated level of quality. This allows sites to move forward based on their strengths vs. being held back by their areas of need.

The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) formative assessment provides reliable, valid, and fair measurement of children's developmental progress, from early infancy through the end of kindergarten. It can be used to support all children in early learning settings, including dual language learners (DLLs) and children with disabilities. The DRDP assessment is mandatory for publicly supported infant/toddler and preschool programs in California and is used to collect required preschool data for IDEA Part B. The DRDP assessment is integral to CDE's efforts to support high-quality early care and learning for all children in publicly supported early learning and care settings and is an indicator in Element 1-Child Observation, on the QCC Rating Matrix. Results of a recent study demonstrated that children in higher-quality-rated preschools showed greater progress in learning and development on the DRDP at the end of preschool than children in programs with lower-quality ratings. In most domains of learning and development, higher-quality preschool was associated with a reduction or elimination of the gaps in learning and development, measured with the DRDP, between DLLs and their non-DLL peers observed in lower-quality preschool programs.

**Marisa Schlieber, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley: *Early Educator Work Environments and Program Quality***

High quality learning environments that support children’s learning and development depend on well-prepared educators and supportive working conditions. To address the need of examining the context in which teaching occurs and how the workplace environment may impede or enhance effective teaching, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) developed the Supportive Environmental Quality Underlying Adult Learning measure, or SEQUAL. SEQUAL is a multipurpose-validated tool examining teaching staff perceptions about workplace policies, practices and relationships that affect their teaching practice and brings their voices into quality improvement efforts. Through assessments of program environment supports within five overarching domains that include teaching supports, learning community, job crafting, well-being and leadership, SEQUAL provides a clear picture of policies, practices, and relationships that support or hinder a teacher’s ability to learn and apply their practice. It is administered directly to teaching staff working with young children, from birth to five, in center-based programs. The tool can assist in understanding the interplay between teacher education, the work environment and efforts to improve program quality and facilitate children’s learning. SEQUAL has been used in various communities across the country and the Center is currently adapting SEQUAL for use in family child care settings.

**Holli Tonyan, California State University Northridge: *Conceptual Model for Measuring Quality in Home-based Childcare Settings***

In order to establish measures of quality that better capture the distinctive features of home-based early care and education, a team from the OPRE-funded [Home-Based Child Care Work Group](#) began by creating a conceptual model for quality. As described in a brief put forward through the [Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Analysis](#) contract, the conceptual model offers a new, structured approach for understanding, defining, and supporting quality in home-based child care settings. The purpose of the model is to highlight features of home-based child care that are linked to outcomes for children, families, and providers. Although grounded in the distinctive features of home settings, the model was intended to generate dialogue among researchers, practitioners and policymakers about how to define quality in ways that better support children, families, and providers across all settings.