

2010 CCPRC Annual Meeting
Workshop Session B2
October 21, 2010, 2:30 p.m.

Integration of QRIS and State Professional Development Systems

Description

This breakout session explored the current research and practice on the integration and alignment of state professional development systems and quality rating and improvement systems. Each presenter provided their perspectives on indicators of effective integration of QRIS and professional development systems, including research and examples from the field. Participants engaged in small group discussions around issues of importance to their work in this area.

Facilitator

Lori Connors-Tadros, The Finance Project

Discussant

Kathryn Tout, Child Trends

Presenters

Sheila Smith, National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)
Sarah LeMoine, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
Pam Winton, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Scribe

Cara Preuss, Washington State University

1. Documents in Session Folder

- “Integration of QRIS and State Professional Development Systems,” Lori Connors-Tadros
- “Integration of QRIS and State Professional Development Systems,” Sheila Smith
- “Integration of QRIS and State Professional Development Systems,” Sarah LeMoine
- “Provocations on Integration of QRIS and State Professional Development Systems,” Pam Winton

2. Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1:** Lori Connors-Tadros introduced the goals and agenda for the session and discussed the status of integration of state professional development systems and QRIS along a continuum of integration, alignment, and coordination. Ensuing research agendas and outcomes require different approaches based on the goal, keeping in mind that semantics matter. There are a few “touch points” to consider that will impact the degree to which PD and QRIS can be fully integrated, including regulated/unregulated settings, certification/accreditation, higher education, and training and trainers. Recognizing that there is an interplay among systems of licensing/regulation, professional development (for individuals) and quality improvement systems (for programs), policy makers and researchers will need to address varying age ranges of children served, types of program settings, and characteristics of practitioners.

- **Summary of Presentation #2:** Sheila Smith provided an overview of a research project that included contacting State QRIS administrators in 17 States. Respondents were interviewed about their professional development and what happens during professional training. Sheila highlighted some findings of the study and presented some questions. There is a lot of variety, little standardization, and some duplication between and within States. Some States might want to consider a “redeployment” of professional development resources and rethink the intensity for various audiences. Some standardization might help, but she cautioned that too much standardization could be a problem.
- **Summary of Presentation #3:** Sarah LeMoine indicated that professional development should cross sectors, moving towards an integrated, comprehensive PD system for all EC professionals (both direct and non-direct service). NAEYC provides a State PD system blueprint for applying principles for policymaking, including integration; quality assurance; diversity, inclusion and access; and compensation parity. Essential policy areas include professional standards, career pathways, articulation, advisory structure, data, and financing. Systems should be based on evidence (research and best practice) and address the true needs and aspirations of the workforce across all sectors. Systems need both program components and supportive policies to be effective and sustainable. One of the central challenges is data; solid data is essential to understand who the workforce is and their needs, and to understand capacity, gaps, quality, etc. QRIS and PD systems need and benefit from centralized or coordinated/linked workforce data that ideally includes unique identifiers, workforce demographics and PD data on the systems and individuals that is verified and disaggregated. NAEYC and NACCRRRA have developed definitions for PD that are focused on training and TA to support states in: defining what training/TA is needed to support successful participation in QRIS, and how it integrates with PD activities and systems; determining who can provide training and TA, and how; and tracking and counting TA as part of an individual’s professional development.
- **Summary of Presentation #4:** Pam Winton summarized professional development alignment in one sentence: we need to think about who needs what and how. This applies to the professional development of child care providers and professional development for those who train them. More specifically, we need to think about professional development around policy areas and individualize professional development methodology according to need (for example, awareness could include reading or lectures, but changing attitudes, values and skills/practices requires something more like clinical supervision, coaching, and self-reflection). It is recommended that States create structures to support professional development systems, with evidence-based practice at the centerpiece of the system. More research is needed. A key point is that the research must include the use and implementation of the new practices in the real world.

3. Summary of Work Group Discussions

- **Group 1:** The reality is that we don’t have good cost data. We need good evaluation data, and we need to better understand costs and put more dollars into evaluation. More time needs to be devoted to thinking about the people who carry-out training and PD. It is

challenging to enter a system that has already evolved. As States look at what others are doing, should they look to the newest programs?

- **Group 2:** Approaches vary across States. Infrastructure needs to be built and resources used in effective ways. Credentials need to be linked to QRIS, but less emphasis should be placed on the “what” (observation scales that constrict quality definition). The field loses its PD investment as trained providers move onto K–12.
- **Group 3:** Massachusetts and Vermont talked about careful studies on PD and responded to duplication and content. Findings need to be applied...and methodology and findings need to be shared more widely. Programs need to be developed and used to develop quality improvement capacity. For example, New Mexico uses online video-based training. It comes down to cost; it is cheaper to work from inside as compared to hiring out.
- **Group 4:** Some concerns were expressed about the proposed changes to the CCDF State Plan Preprint. QRIS is evolving. Not only do we not know the answers, but we don’t know what the questions should be. PD has changed, and this isn’t necessarily reflected in the QRIS changes. A second big issue is to redefine TA and see it reflected at the Federal level. Can we turn a lens on TA at the national and Federal levels the same way it is being done at the State level?
- **Group 5:** This group primarily discussed NAEYC’s work on definitions, wondering if they draw on State competencies. (The second stage of the process is competencies. They want to build off work in progress.) The group would like to see that work go forward. Also, there are lessons to be learned from North Carolina’s new EC certification policy which got ahead of capacity (there are not enough CEU granting opportunities). In the rush to comply with new laws, they are losing quality.
- **Group 6:** This group discussed issues around systemic integration. Problems included: lack of good data that can tell us how integrated systems are with QRIS; and activities such as coaching and onsite mentoring that don’t have articulation with credits or training hours. Data tracking systems are critical as is using QRIS evaluations to improve the technical assistance that is provided. Implementation studies are recommended so that policy-makers can know if the new structures are getting the desired effect. Legislative mandates that include target dates tend to cause things to move faster but inhibit research.

4. What were the three or four key issues raised during the session? What are the implications of these issues for policymakers and new directions in CCDF?

- Infrastructural elements and systemic integration issues around professional development, planning, and career advising were some key implications. What informs the decisions that are being made? Is it effective? Is it cost effective? Do implementation studies. We need methodologies. It was suggested to build from within and not rely on the outside (to be more cost effective).
- Applause for the work on definitions. QRIS piece is changing a lot. Not only do we not know the answers, but we don’t know what the questions should be.
- QRIS and PD in the future: we need to work on the things that are needed, not convenient.
- More time should be spent thinking about the people who do training and PD.