



QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEMS (QRIS): INCLUSION OF INFANT/TODDLER QUALITY INDICATORS

WHAT IS A QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM?

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) define standards for incremental levels of quality across a range of categories, and establish systems for rating and improving quality child care for all children. The National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative reviewed 24 QRIS¹ to identify States that explicitly include infant/toddler (I/T) quality indicators. The review did not include State licensing and accreditation requirements, so I/T indicators that are reflected in these regulations are not included in this fact sheet.

Most QRIS support quality for young children birth through age 5 years, but there is a need for policymakers to be more intentional about including indicators that are specific to I/T care and education. QRIS that include specific standards for I/T ensure that families, communities and policymakers have the necessary information to assess the quality of care in local programs.

This fact sheet is intended to highlight QRIS that include specific I/T indicators to promote discussions as States, Territories and Tribes begin to develop, revise, and implement QRIS for quality I/T care.

INFANT/TODDLER ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES/ PROGRAM DESIGN

Policies that are developed to guide program design and implementation of I/T care are required by a few States. Ten States require policies to address issues such as day-to-day routines and continuity of care for I/T.

Policy & Program Design		
AR, IA, ID, MD, MT, NC	IN, LA, ME	IN, MD, MT, NC, RI
Require program policies to address I/T issues such as safe sleep routines or individualized needs of family	Require continuity of care policies and practices	Require assignment of primary caregiver

INFANT/TODDLER STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE

The following 10 States require lower staff-to-child ratios for children birth through 2 years: CO, ID, KY, LA, MT, NM, NC, OH, TN, RI. Nine States also require that infants be served in smaller groups than established for toddlers (CO, KY, ID, LA, MT, NM, NC, OH, RI).

INFANT/TODDLER FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

A few States set standards that guide family engagement in I/T early care and education. Eight States (DE, KY, LA, MA, ME, NM, PA, RI) set benchmarks for family engagement activities. Montana supports I/T families during the enrollment process by providing I/T program policies.

INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM EVALUATION

Infant/Toddler evaluation criteria, such as the ITTERS-R, is required by 23 States (AR, CO, DC, DE, IA, ID, IL, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, MS, MT, NC, NH, NM, OH, OK, PA, RI, TN, VT). Mississippi and Montana include evaluation of caregiver/child interactions (such as Arnett —Caregiver Interaction Scale).

INFANT/TODDLER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT/ CURRICULUM AND HEALTH & SAFETY

States may set standards that define quality in infant/toddler care environments. Quality indicators for I/T Learning Environment/Curriculum are required by 14 States and I/T Health & Safety indicators are required by 5 States.

Program Environment/Curriculum	
I/T Program standards	IA, IN, MA, MD, ME, OH, PA
Approved curricula that include I/T	DE, MA, MD, ME, NM, NC, OH, PA, RI
Curriculum references I/T ELGs	AR, DE, MA, MD, ME, MT, OH, PA, TN
Health and Safety	
Sanitation, diapering procedures	DE, IA, MT
Safe materials, furnishing, equipment, correct sizing	DE, IA, IN, MT
Outdoor play	IA, IN, MD

INFANT/TODDLER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I/T Specific Training	DE, IA, IN, LA, MA, MD, MT, NH, OH
I/T Specific Health & Safety Training	IA, IN, MA, MT
I/T Specific Coursework Required	IA, MT
I/T Credential	MA, MT, NC

Opportunities for the I/T workforce to engage in professional development activities are a way to help caregivers acquire new knowledge. I/T professional development opportunities are offered by 10 States in various areas including health and safety, I/T coursework and I/T credentialing activities.

¹ These 24 States and Territories (AR, CO, DC, DE, IA, ID, IL, IN, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MS, MT, NC, NH, NM, OH, OK, PA, RI, TN, VT) were identified at http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pontopics/quickfact_QRIS.html as implementing a statewide QRIS as of April 2011.

