

DEC Conference 2015  
*Quality Rating and Improvement  
Systems and Inclusive Practices: One  
State's Approach*

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# Welcome and Introductions

- EI practitioner
- ECSE practitioner
- Related service provider
- EC professional
- Higher Ed faculty
- Researcher
- Graduate student
- Families
- Other?
- Heard about or know what a QRIS is

# Session Objectives

- Participants will:
  - Understand how Oregon includes provisions for identifying children with special needs in their state QRIS standards.
  - Understand implications for implementing these practices on EI and ECSE personnel.
  - Identify implications for policy development/revision.

# Setting the Stage

“There is some empirical evidence to show that the quality of early childhood programs that enroll young children with disabilities generally is as good as, or slightly better than, the quality of programs that do not enroll these children.” (NPDI, 2009,p. 4)

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion. (2009). Why program quality matters for early childhood inclusion: Recommendations for professional development. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Author. Retrieved from <http://community.fpg.unc.edu/npdci>.

# Setting the Stage (continued)

Data trends over the past three decades indicate that the percentage of preschool children with disabilities who receive early childhood special education services in general early childhood programs **has remained largely unchanged.**

Barton, E.E. & Smith, B.J. (2015). Advancing high quality preschool inclusion: A discussion and recommendations for the field. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*. 35(2), 69-78. doi:10.1177/0271121415583048.

# What is a QRIS?

- A QRIS is “a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings” (Mitchell, 2005, p. 4).

Mitchell, A.W. (2005). Stair steps to quality: A guide for states and communities developing Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for early care and education. United Way Success by 6. Retrieved from [http://www.earlychildhoodfinance.org/downloads/2005/MitchStairSteps\\_2005.pdf](http://www.earlychildhoodfinance.org/downloads/2005/MitchStairSteps_2005.pdf)

- A QRIS provides a framework for building strong early care and education systems within states.

Build Initiative .(2015). Retrieved from <http://www.buildinitiative.org/>

# Background Information

- Each state establishes its own QRIS standards and approaches to rating quality of programs.
  - Definitions of quality, criteria, and designation levels vary nationally.
- States vary in their level of incorporating standards supporting inclusion as a specific component of their QRIS.
  - Only 29 of 42 states with QRIS indicated any substantive reference to inclusive practices in their design.

# Background Information (continued)

- Many states are refining QRIS systems, including efforts to strengthen criteria for determining the quality of inclusive practices.
  - Information on the current status of these efforts is not readily available for review.

Horowitz, M. & Squires, J. (2014). *QRIS and inclusion: Do state QRIS standards support the learning needs of all children?* (CEELO FastFact). New Brunswick, NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes.



# True or False

- Missouri is the only state without a statewide QRIS system due to state law.
- Alabama is the only state that is piloting QRIS as of February 2015.
- California, Kansas and Florida use regional systems.
- In 2011, the Hawaii Department of Human Services developed a proposal for a QIRs – the ‘r’ is lowercase to emphasize the improvement aspect.

# True or False

- The movement to improve and designate levels of quality **began in the 1990s** when some states began rewarding programs that had achieved national accreditation with higher subsidy reimbursement rates through child care subsidy programs (like Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services program).

# What is Oregon's QRIS?



# Oregon's Quality Rating and Improvement System

- Successful Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge federal grant
  - Funded 2012
  - Systems building money for early childhood in Oregon
  - \$30 million over 4 years
- Voluntary system



# Oregon's QRIS Goals

## Goals:

- Raise the quality of child care in early learning and school age programs.
- Provide resources and supports to improve programs.
- Recognize program quality through rating system.

## Because:

- Quality programs serve and support the needs of all children, including children with disabilities.



# Oregon's QRIS History and Field Test

Why QRIS?

# Partners



# Oregon's QRIS Field Test



# Oregon's QRIS Overview



So, what is it?

# QRIS Components

**Building  
Block with 5  
Tiers**

**5 Domains**

**2 Versions of  
Materials**

## Quality Improvement

**Quality  
Improvement Plans**

**Self- Assessments**

**Supports**

## Quality Rating

**Portfolio System of  
Documentation**

**Incentives**

# Oregon's QRIS 5 Tier Building Block System



# QRIS Standards Structure

## Domains

- Overall categories of quality
- 5 total

## Standards

- Program standards, organized by domain
- 33 total

## Indicators

- Star levels of standards
- Usually 3 per standard
- Some standards only have 1 or 2 indicators

## Evidence

- Found in portfolio only
- Measurable structural indicators that standard is present in program

# QRIS Domains and Standards

**Children's Learning  
and Development**

• 12 Standards

**Health and Safety**

• 6 Standards

**Personnel  
Qualifications**

• 5 Standards

**Family Partnerships**

• 4 Standards

**Administration and  
Business Practices**

• 6 Standards

Find Out More!



[www.oregonqris.org](http://www.oregonqris.org)

# Oregon's QRIS and Supporting Children with Disabilities and Their Families



It is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education's position that "all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations." (p.1)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education.  
(2015). Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early  
Childhood Programs. Retrieved from

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf>

# National Definition from U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services

**“Inclusion in early childhood programs** refers to including children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional), friendships with peers, and sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities, to those with the most significant disabilities.” (p.3)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education. (2015). Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf>

# Specific Areas from the State Recommendations that Oregon's QRIS has addressed are...

- Setting goals and tracking data
  - Oregon has a robust system around tracking programs who have expanded inclusive early learning opportunity through high quality practices.
- Ensuring quality rating frameworks are inclusive
  - The blending of inclusion throughout our standards. Ranging from 3-Star all the way up to our 5-Star programs.

# State Recommendations (continued)

- Through QRIS we are continuing to build a coordinated Early Childhood Professional System
  - Building common knowledge and competencies for EC providers.
  - Ensuring that certifications, credentials and work force programs have a strong focus on inclusion.
  - Insuring that personnel qualifications facilitate inclusion.
  - The state has a strong focus on a cross sector approach for professional development and TA.

# Inclusive QRIS Programs

<b>Total Programs in QRIS</b>	<b>1153</b>
<b>Number Serving at least one Child on IFSP/IEP</b>	<b>465</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>40.3%</b>

*Note.* As of September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015

# How Oregon's QRIS Addresses Children with Disabilities and Their Families

- Based on premise that inclusion of children with disabilities should be part of Oregon's QRIS.
- Oregon's QRIS addresses the needs of **ALL** children and families.
- No separate Domain for children with disabilities.
- Woven throughout Domains and Standards.

# Examples from Oregon's QRIS

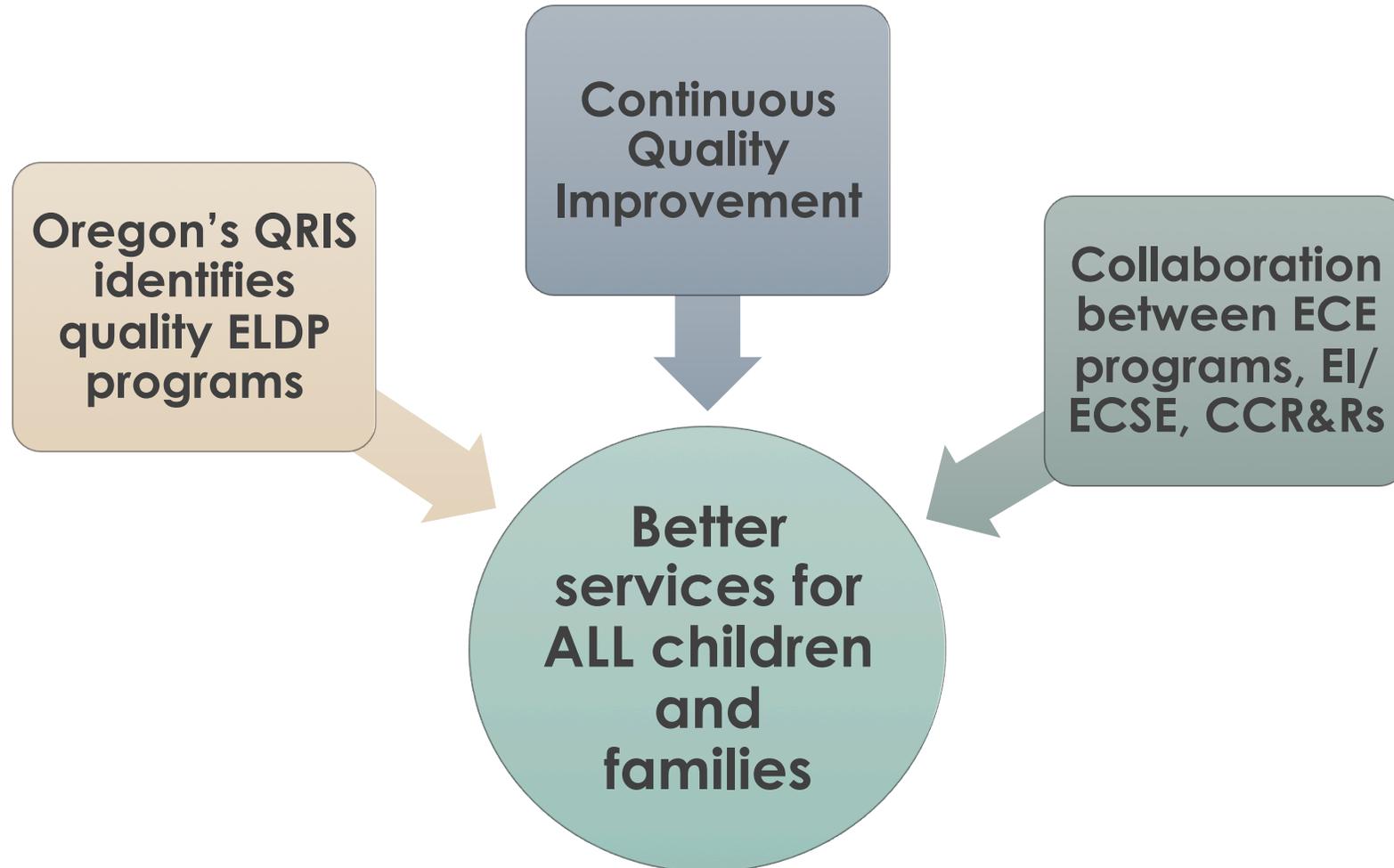
- LD1- 4 Star: The program's philosophy explicitly ensures the inclusion of all children.
- LD3 – 3 Star: The program uses a basic indoor environmental arrangement that supports children's learning and development that includes including space that:
  - is accessible to all children enrolled in the program
  - has enough room for equipment needed by children with disabilities
- LD7 – 3 Star: The program uses basic curriculum activities that support children's learning and development that include:
  - adaptations that allow all children, including those with disabilities to participate

# Examples from Oregon's QRIS

(continued)

- HS5 – 3 & 4 Star: Including children with special health needs.
- FP1: Program uses family input and feedback to guide program planning and policy decisions.
- FP2: Program meets individual needs of children through mutually respectful, two-way communication with families.

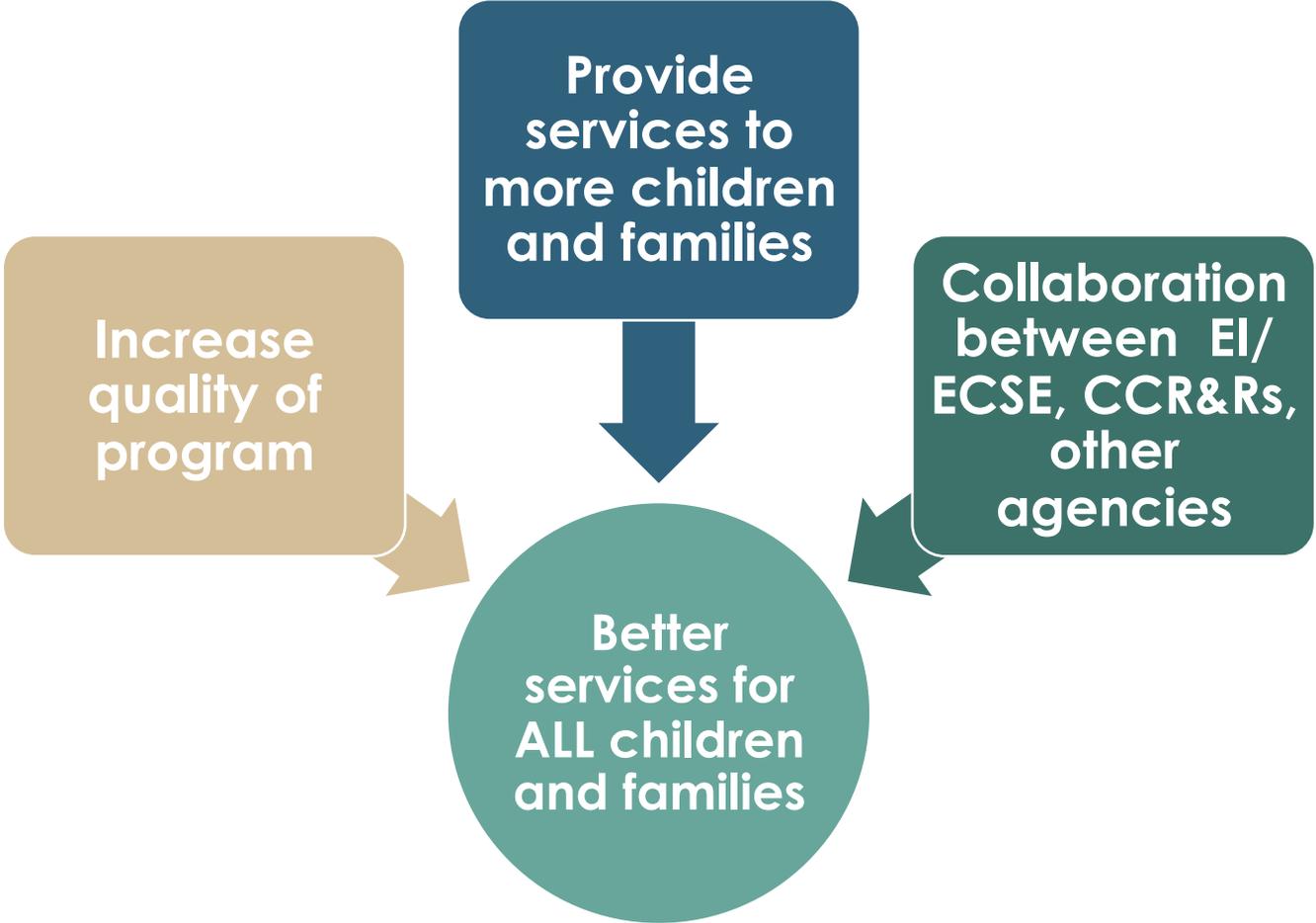
# Implications of Oregon's QRIS for EI/ECSE Staff



# EI/ECSE Staff Supporting Children with Disabilities and Staff in Community Programs

- Develop developmentally appropriate and functional goals.
- Assist with implementation of IFSP.
- Provide strategies to fully engage child in activities.
- Suggest, assist with curriculum modifications and adaptations.
- Make specialized equipment and materials available.
- Use everyday routines to promote development and learning.
- Oversee integration of specialized/related services.

# Implications of Oregon's QRIS for Supporting Children with Disabilities in Community Programs



# ELDP Programs Supporting EI/ECSE

- Provide a high quality, developmentally appropriate environment.
- Use activities and materials that are well organized and accessible.
- Establish and maintain good reciprocal relationship with parents.
- Incorporate high quality adult-child interactions.
- Identify and build on child strengths.
- Provide a high quality early childhood curriculum.
- Provide ongoing assessment of child.



# Implications for Policy Development/Revision



# Activity

- In a small group, respond to the following questions:
  - How does your state's QRIS support the inclusion of children with disabilities in community programs?
  - What implications can you identify for state policy in the development, revision and refinement of state QRIS standards related to the inclusion of young children with special needs in community programs?



# Implications for Policy & Practice

- Incorporate inclusion within and across standards
  - Federal and national leadership can strengthen inclusion practices.
  - Collaborate with Part C community based EI agencies.
- Provide family-centered QRIS for parents
  - Clearly identify inclusive programs.
- Use valid and reliable tools to review QRIS
  - Provide technical assistance & professional development.
  - Collaborate with higher education faculty & research institutions.

# Implications for Policy & Practice

## (continued)

- States incorporate inclusion indicators in their child care licensing standards
  - Offer TA and monitor them based on legally applicable standards under the IDEA, Section 504 and the ADA.
- States incentivize high quality inclusive early learning models
  - Publicly recognize programs.
  - Use tiered reimbursement in QRIS.
  - Provide credit for trainings on children with disabilities and inclusion.
  - Provide technical assistance to programs to implement inclusive practices.

# Implications for Policy & Practice

## (continued)

- Each level of a QRIS should include indicators applicable to children with disabilities
- States should address barriers to inclusion
  - Review the IEP process.
- State agencies should hold local programs and agencies accountable for providing access to inclusive early learning opportunities
  - Document how they are meeting requirements to provide services in the LRE.

Source: Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education.(2015). Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs.

# Question and Answer



# Please let us learn from you



# Resources and Links

- BUILD Initiative Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

<http://www.buildinitiative.org/TheIssues/EarlyLearning/QualityQRIS.aspx>

- Oregon's QRIS

[www.oregonqris.org](http://www.oregonqris.org)

- QRIS Compendium

<http://qriscompendium.org>

- QRIS National Learning Network

<http://qrisnetwork.org>

# References

Barton, E.E. & Smith, B.J. (2015). Advancing high quality preschool inclusion: A discussion and recommendations for the field. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*. 35(2), 69-78. doi:10.1177/0271121415583048.

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Thank You!