Aligning state systems: How Rhode Island's BrightStars QRIS, professional development, and resource and referral systems work together

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BrightStars Mission

• BrightStars helps families in Rhode Island access quality child care, early learning, and school-age programs

• We help child care providers learn about best practices in early learning and apply them to the care children receive

• We recognize program quality and give parents information to make choices about their children’s care and education

Rhode Island AEYC is the current home of BrightStars – QRIS, PD, CCR&R
QRIS Background
Rhode Island Context

• **Programs (2012)** - 325 early childhood centers, 650 family child care programs, 100 independent school-age child care programs

• **Subsidy program (2011)** - 72% of children in licensed centers (includes school-age), 27% in licensed family child care, 1% in unregulated care

• **BrightStars**: Operated by RIAEYC, 5 star levels and 6 domains, building block structure, voluntary and open to all programs in compliance with licensing, limited financial incentives, as of November 2012 – 15% participation
BrightStars QRIS Map

Define Quality

Measure Quality

Improve Quality & Access
Lessons Learned from States & Experts

• **Conduct pilot test** of standards prior to assigning ratings
• Base it on **research**
• Make it **understandable and achievable**
• Minimize use of **self-reported data**
• Make it something you can **administer**
• **Gather data, adjust** supports and the standards
Design & Pilot Phase

2005 - 2007: DESIGN PHASE

- Community-based process of learning and development
- Intentional gap-closing (ex: NARA licensing work)

2008 - 2010: PILOT & EARLY IMPLEMENTATION – Partnership with FPG Child Development Institute to:

- Evaluate the draft frameworks to determine how well they work
- Collect data to potentially revise the criteria and/or scoring rules
- Build local capacity to gather accurate quality data and establish the rating system statewide
- Gather baseline information on the quality of programs in Rhode Island to provide a better picture of where we are starting from and inform the improvement system
Field Test Results: Centers/Preschool Star Rating
FPG Recommendations

• Measure fewer things
• Adjust the framework to increase distribution of stars
• Build infrastructure now
• Recognize that programs have to:
  – 1) know what’s expected
  – 2) have time to meet the criteria
  – 3) be motivated to participate
Revised Framework* Applied to Pilot Data

* Center/preschool framework
Rhode Island’s Quality Studies

• Three separate studies across 3 ECE settings: centers & preschools, family child care homes, and school-age (K-5)

• Purpose: To better understand the quality of licensed child care in RI

• Samples: 69 child care centers; 50 family child care homes; 30 licensed school-age programs

• Measures included Environment Rating Scales, director/provider questionnaire, staff qualifications review, and facility checklist (ratio & group size)

• All three study reports available on www.rikidscount.org
School-Age Quality
- Low: 10%
- Medium: 7%
- High: 83%

Family Child Care Quality
- Low: 0%
- Medium: 36%
- High: 64%

Infant-Toddler Quality
- Low: 6%
- Medium: 20%
- High: 74%

Preschool Quality
- Low: 10%
- Medium: 4%
- High: 86%
Other Findings/Highlights

• **Staff Qualifications:**
  
  o 25% of infant/toddler lead group teachers had only high school diploma / GED; 50% of preschool lead teachers had Bachelor’s Degree or higher
  
  o 52% of family child care providers had only high school diploma / GED; 90% did not have RI Early Learning Standards Certificate
  
  o 43% of school-age lead staff had Bachelor’s or higher
Overall Recommendations

• Use BrightStars QRIS as overarching framework
• Build infrastructure
• Invest in professional development systems for all professionals, including teachers, directors, family child care providers, and school-age professionals
  – Continued education and professional development are key to QI
  – Improve *and* maintain quality
  – Tailor PD to particular needs; consider intensity, individualization, and sustainability
  – Capacity to support speakers of other languages
• Use multiple strategies (financial incentives, compensation initiatives, etc.) for participation
Implementation & Future Directions

2009 - 2012: FULL-SCALE IMPLEMENTATION

- Ratings for centers began in January 2009
- Ratings for family child care began in September 2009
- Ratings for school-age child care began in May 2011
- Time-limited financial incentives
- Recruitment, recognition, and reliability

Fall 2011: PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF (CENTER) FRAMEWORK

- Community engagement

2012 AND BEYOND: EXPAND, ALIGN, VALIDATE
Programs Participating in BrightStars

November 1, 2012

- 1 Star: 80
- 2 Stars: 32
- 3 Stars: 17
- 4 Stars: 22
- 5 Stars: 10
Getting In & Moving Up

• **15%** of licensed programs participate in BrightStars

• Rhode Island currently has approximately 34,000 licensed child care slots; **over 5,000** of these slots are in BrightStars-rated programs

• **94%** of BrightStars programs accept state child care subsidy payments

• **79%** of family child care providers enrolled in BrightStars QRIS speak Spanish only or have identified it as their preferred language

• **74%** of BrightStars programs are in four core poverty cities

• **36% of eligible programs** have increased their BrightStars star rating:
  - **13%** of these increased their rating by more than one star level
Connecting Initiatives

- Licensing
- Pre-K
- Head Start
- Subsidy
- Infant/Toddler, School-Age
- Scholarships
- Prof. Dev. System, Higher Ed
- Grants to Providers
- ELS
- CCR&R

QRS
Professional Development
PD History

• Until 2011, CCR&R spilt into two contracts – PD and Parent Referral

• Limited connection/alignment with the QRIS and other initiatives

• Limited assessment of workforce PD needs

• No state PD plan
Early 2011: First Steps

• Subcontracts for PD – credit-bearing coursework, PD in multiple languages, redesign of required PD

• Systems planning with State Early Learning Council and Anne Mitchell (completed in Fall 2011; plan approved in 2012)

• QRIS & community partners contributed to needs assessment
Policies that connect professional development activities and that support and make possible effective implementation of a state system of professional development

Essential Policy Areas

- Professional Standards
- Career Pathways
- Articulation
- Advisory Structure
- Data
- Financing
Cross-Sector Approach

Representatives from:
- Child care (*including family child care*)
- Head Start
- Pre-K
- Early Intervention
- Preschool Special Education
- School Age

*First step: understand how each sector’s current PD is structured, key resources, and elements.*
RI Landscape Survey

- **State Agencies**: DHS, RIDE, DCYF, HEALTH
- **Higher Ed**
- **Quality Projects**: BrightStars, CCSN, LISC, PASA, Ready to Learn Providence, RIASPA, RI Early Learning Standards, RITTA Center, T.E.A.C.H.
- **Programs**: CCAP, Head Start/EHS, Pre-K, EI/Special Ed.
- **Providers**: Centers, Preschools, Family
- **Regulations & Standards**: DCYF, RIDE Approval, BrightStars, Nat’l Accreditation, Core Competencies
- **Advocates & Others**: United Way, Kids Count, RIAEYC.
Data to Inform PD System Development

• QRIS information: *baseline studies, QI and PD Plans*
• Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration Project
• Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund
• Rhode Island Child Care Support Network
• Early Reading First and ECEPD projects
• Many interviews with community stakeholders
Quality Improvement Priorities to Inform PD and TA Systems

Reducing/Eliminating Low-Quality Care (< 3 on ERS):
• 20% of infant/toddler classrooms are providing low quality care
• 64% of licensed family child care providers are providing low quality care
• Smaller #s of preschool and school-age

Focus on Specific Groups:
• Family child care (particularly for Spanish speaking providers with few opportunities for PD)
• Center-based infant-toddler care
• Support for directors and administrators
Moving from Not Good to Good

Potential Priorities

• Expand professional development designed for centers serving infants/toddlers and for family child care providers
• PD in child development (appropriate expectations)
• PD in behavior management/discipline (positive approaches)
• PD re: health & safety practices (safety of environment)
• PD re: developmentally appropriate practice, activities, curriculum; help in accessing appropriate materials and equipment
• Leadership development for directors/owners/Executive Directors
• Increased on-site technical assistance and monitoring
Parent Outreach & Education
Integrating in State Systems

• First, integration with BrightStars QRIS – parents know only BrightStars

• Then, coordination with United Way 2-1-1:
  – 2-1-1 staff are trained by BrightStars and provided access to our program database and client management system
  – Improves services to families by ensuring access to information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and in 175 languages and dialects
  – Creates efficiency and cost savings
  – Supports families in accessing information on a range of health, social, and community services

• Comprehensive marketing plan with some shared activities
For families:
- Quality child care options and referrals
- DHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Local resources for families
- Info/links on child development

For providers/professionals:
- Links to DHS quality initiatives
- Information on QRIS and accreditation
- Lending library
- Job board
- Master calendar of all relevant training and PD
- RI Core Competencies and Career Lattice documents
- Templates: QI plans, IPDP, self-assessment
- Links to local and national organizations and resources
Parents

Find child care that meets your family’s needs, learn how to evaluate options and pay for care.

Start here ▶

Providers & Staff

Learn about training opportunities, get technical assistance, and find resources to help you offer quality care to children.

Start here ▶

Looking for Child Care?

Search BrightStars Programs

Search for quality-rated child care programs in Rhode Island

choose a city or town  Or  ZIP code search

Advanced Search ▶

Search all of Rhode Island

Search all licensed child care programs in Rhode Island

External Link ▶

News

• Thinking about applying to BrightStars? Download an application for:
  • Child Care Centers and Preschools
  • Family Child Care Homes
  • School Age Child Care

• BrightStars Partners with United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island to Help Families Find Child Care

• Check Out the New Family Guide to Choosing Quality Care 📖

Events

• Parents: Check out activities and community calendars

• Providers: View our professional development calendar and register for training online
Next Steps

- RTT-ELC
- 100% participation; XX% engagement
- 30% of programs at 4/5 Star by 2015
- Financial incentives
- Expanding and aligning resources
- Revise all standards (programs, workforce, children)
- Align
Resources

RI Pilot & Quality Study Reports
Rhode Island AEYC & BrightStars
FPG Child Development Institute
NAEYC

www.rikidscount.org
www.BrightStars.org
www.fpg.unc.edu
naeyc.org
Questions & Discussion

Thank you!

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