The ABCs of QRS

Proposed Quality Rating System for Minnesota School Age Care Programs

QRS Task Force, November 2005
The Indicators Explained

The QRS covers seven categories of quality, selected because of the field’s consensus and strong research base linking them to both program quality and to children’s positive outcomes and school readiness.

For each of the seven quality categories, there are four graduated levels of quality with specific indicators to be met at each level. This “building block” design means that a program must meet all the indicators in one level before receiving a rating for the next level.

The seven areas of quality covered by the QRS are:

• Professional development and training
• Child–provider ratios
• Licensing compliance
• Learning environment
• Family partnerships and education
• Management and administration
• Program evaluation

For more information, email Nancy.Johnson@gmdca.org or visit: www.ready4k.org
### LEVEL 1

- **Professional development**  
  Combination of age, experience and training requirements by staff position. For example, senior group leaders must be at least 18, have 1,040 hours of experience and 6 semester credits in relevant training.
- **Ratios**  
  Grades K-6: 1:15 and maximum group size 30
- **Learning environment**  
  Self-study using School Age Environmental Rating Scale.
- **Family partnerships**  
  Programs must have open door policy.
- **Management/administrative**  
  Programs must provide staff orientation, maintain personnel policies and provide staff evaluations.
- **Program evaluation**  
  Must have a formal grievance process for families in place.

### LEVEL 2

- **Professional development**  
  Combination of age, experience and training requirements by staff position. For example, at least 75% of senior group leaders must have at least 12 semester credits in relevant coursework or equivalent.
- **Ratios**  
  K–1: 1:12  
  maximum group size 30  
  Grades 1–6, 1:15  
  maximum group size 30  
  Grades K–6, 1:12  
  maximum group size 30
- **Learning environment**  
  Observed School Age Care Environmental Rating Scale score of 3 or higher, and when Minnesota’s Early Childhood Indicators of Progress are available for school age, introduce them into curriculum.
- **Family partnerships**  
  System of regular communication with families. Use one way to communicate with families and one family education strategy.
- **Management/administration**  
  At least two employee benefits; and survey staff annually about working conditions and compensation.
- **Program evaluation**  
  Process for collecting feedback from staff and/or parents for program improvement.

### LEVEL 3

- **Professional development**  
  Combination of age, experience and training requirements by staff position. For example, every grouping would be required to have a senior group leader with a minimum of an AA in relevant coursework or equivalent.
- **Learning environment**  
  Observed School Age Care Environmental Rating Scale score of 3 or higher, and when Minnesota’s Early Childhood Indicators of Progress are available for school age, use to align with them into curriculum.
- **Family partnerships**  
  Cultural parent in-take form used, formal system of parent feedback, and at least two ways of communicating with families, and two family education strategies.
- **Management/administration**  
  Program must offer at least three employee benefits.
- **Program evaluation**  
  Collect input from parents, staff and board to develop annual improvement plan.

### LEVEL 4

- Accredited programs will automatically reach level 4.
- Programs that do not wish to become accredited may achieve level 4 by meeting the criteria in level 3, plus the following:
  - **Professional development**  
    Combination of age, experience and training requirements by staff position. For example, at least 75% of groupings must have a senior group leader with a minimum of a BA in relevant coursework or equivalent.
  - **Learning environment**  
    Observed School Age Care Environmental Rating Scale score of 3 or higher, and when Minnesota’s Early Childhood Indicators of Progress are available for school age, use a child assessment tool that aligns with the indicators of progress.
  - **Family partnerships**  
    Use at least three ways of communicating with families and three family education strategies.
  - **Management/administration**  
    Program must offer at least three employee benefits.

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QRS Preparation “Field Test”
From October 2005 through March 2006, Child Trends, a research and evaluation organization, has been contracted to develop the materials and procedures to operationalize the task force’s QRS plan. A small number of providers will help during this “field test” of the QRS plan.

Grants, training supports, and performance awards for providers participating in the QRS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority for Existing Sources of Financial Support for Quality</th>
<th>Improvement Grants</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCR&amp;R Program Improvement Grants</td>
<td>$500–$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEACH and REETAIN Scholarships - Bonuses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accreditation validation</td>
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<td>50% of fees reimbursed</td>
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Annual Performance Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Performance Awards</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$70 per child per year</td>
<td>$100 per child per year</td>
<td>$150 per child per year</td>
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Where Will Funding for the QRS Come From?
We will request funding from the private/public Minnesota Early Learning Fund as well as regional economic development funds, private and community philanthropy and from the state legislature.

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