



What is a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)?

A Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) rates early care and education programs using consistent criteria and provides ongoing support to help programs improve their quality. It can also help families easily identify high-quality early care and education for their children. Nearly every state in the nation is engaged in improving the quality of early care and education programs through statewide QRIS. In California, the QRIS consists of a five-tiered rating system. A higher rating earns sites a higher tier.

How does a QRIS help young children?

Research shows that children learn best in stimulating environments with well-trained and well-educated teachers and caregivers. Because the early years are the most important time in a child's development, the higher the quality of early care and education children receive, the more children benefit. A QRIS creates a system to continually evaluate and improve the overall quality of early care and education.

Which sites can participate?

Humboldt's QRIS funding initially targets California State Preschool Programs. Ultimately, we hope all early learning programs will participate in the QRIS, raising the level of quality countywide while giving families more information when choosing a provider. Five programs are participating this year and we hope to double that number (at minimum!) with programs that represent our diverse communities and needs, including geographic, cultural and demographic considerations.

What is the process to participate?

- Contact the QRIS Coordinator
- Fill out an application and self-review checklist
- Receive training on Pinwheel database and upload data
- Arrange any needed assessments with coordinator
- Site and file review
- Meet with a coach, create a Quality Improvement Plan and enter a coaching relationship
- Receive a rating
- Programs rating at Tiers 2 and 3 will receive coaching and materials; Tier 4 and 5 programs will receive financial incentives as well as coaching and some materials.

The QRIS Consortium is a partnership between First 5 Humboldt, Humboldt County Office of Education, Changing Tides Family Services, The 0-8 Mental Health Collaborative, North Coast Children's Services, College of the Redwoods, Humboldt State University and the Local Child Care Planning Council.

What kind of support do sites receive to improve quality?

Participating QRIS sites receive:

- Onsite coaching to set and meet improvement goals
- Access to in-person and online trainings
- Technical assistance to understand and meet QRIS participation requirements
- Incentives to support continued quality improvement and grant awards for reaching Tiers 4 & 5 on the Rating Matrix

How are sites rated?

A QRIS Rater evaluates sites according to the QRIS Matrix used by all QRIS counties in California. The rated elements include:

- Child Observation
- Developmental & Health Screenings
- Qualifications for Lead Teachers & Directors
- CLASS & Environmental Rating Systems Assessments
- Ratio & Group Size

Who do I contact to participate or learn more?

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