



QUALITYstarsNY Talking Points & Key Messages

Quality early care and education creates long-term positive outcomes for children and communities.

- A large body of research supports the many positive and long-term outcomes for children who attend high-quality early care and education, including better school performance, higher rates of high school and college completion, increased earnings in adulthood and higher rates of home ownership.
- Communities that invest in a quality early care and education system benefit from reduced costs associated with grade retention and special education, use of health and mental health services and use of the criminal justice system. Cost benefit analyses indicate that there is as much as a 14 to 1 return on an investment made in early care and education in savings on future social service needs.
- High-quality early childhood experiences help to close the achievement gap - low-income children who participate in high-quality early care and education programs have stronger social, emotional, and cognitive skills when they enter school.
- There is a strong correlation between the quality of early care and education programs and the quality of the professionals who staff them.
- Evaluation and research on high-quality early care and education and development has been produced by a host of well-established, nonpartisan groups, among those the Rand Corporation, The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and Nobel Laureate Dr. James Heckman from the University of Chicago.

Implementing Quality Standards through QUALITYstarsNY

- A quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) sets universal standards for early childhood settings and links them to “star ratings” and supports programs in meeting these quality standards. QRIS is currently being used in more than 24 states
- QUALITYstarsNY is New York’s quality rating and improvement system. A field test was recently completed in 13 communities across the state to be sure that the design of the QRIS would lead to strong outcomes and successful investment.
- Funding for the field test and evaluation was provided by \$1.2 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (from OCFS) and private contributions.

QUALITYstarsNY Field Test

The field test was aimed to test the assumptions of the initial design of QUALITYstarsNY and to inform the final system design of QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY). The field test also conveyed the message to the early care and education field that the state was committed to implementing a system that worked for all participants and was informed by the people who would be most impacted by the system -- programs and providers.

- The goals of the field test were to:
 - estimate the likely participation in a statewide QRIS,
 - evaluate processes and procedures,
 - assess the standards, including the point system and documentation requirements,
 - estimate costs of quality improvements and needed infrastructure supports, and
 - identify needed areas of improvement and/or redesign of QSNY.
- The field test differed in important ways from the future full implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. Most significantly it involved a shorter period of assessment, engagement and quality improvement planning. Because of the results of the Field Test, we learned that statewide implementation of QUALITYstarsNY should include an online application option, more clarity about acceptable documentation, both self-assessment and independent ERS observations and more financial incentives and supports.
- The evaluation report on the field test captures participants' experiences in the process and will be used as a guide to improving QSNY for maximum effect and efficiency when fully implemented. As such, many lessons can be learned from the field test, and full implementation will differ significantly from the field test experience.

QUALITYstarsNY Benefits

- QUALITYstarsNY will provide a clear, organized way to assess, improve and communicate the quality of New York's early care and education programs in a wide variety of settings: private child care, center-based care, family and group family child care settings, Head Start, Early Head Start and Universal Pre-K in schools and community-based settings.
- QUALITYstarsNY will benefit:
 - CHILDREN: by creating stronger learning environments, rooted in proven research and techniques,
 - PARENTS: by empowering them to become more informed consumers in choosing high quality early care and education opportunities for their children,
 - PROGRAMS: by offering a roadmap and support to improve the quality of their program,
 - POLICYMAKERS: by instituting proven, uniform tools to guide further improvement of the state's early care and education system, and
 - TAXPAYERS, LEGISLATORS and DONORS: by establishing accountability and a cost-effective system that maximizes the state's limited education funding.