

Nevada Silver State Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System Provider Manual

A guide to QRIS participation for child care centers, family child care and local education agency programs.

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Introduction to Quality (The Q of QRIS)

What is a High Quality Early Childhood Program?

A high quality early childhood program goes beyond the requirements of child care licensing to provide an inclusive environment that supports the physical, social emotional and cognitive development of all children.

In 2019 the Nevada Early Child Advisory Council developed the following definition of quality in early learning programs:

A high quality early childhood program is an inclusive environment that offers services at the highest possible levels for all children and families. These programs provide a safe environment, while promoting the physical, social emotional and cognitive development of all children. High quality environments celebrate and explore the culture, backgrounds and individuality of their children and families. The indicators of quality include, but are not limited to: policies, procedures and administrative practices that are best practices for the workforce, families and children. This would include ample age-appropriate materials; appropriate group size and ratios for each classroom and use of appropriate assessments to assess children's learning and development. Teaching approaches are individualized for each child and are active, stimulating and engaging. Thoughtful standards about health and safety are considered at the licensing level and beyond. Families and community partners are included as valued partners and are invited into all aspects of care and education. All the indicators of quality combine together to create an environment that leads to the highest outcomes and lifelong success for the youngest learners in our state.

This statement continues to guide the work of the Nevada Silver State Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

Indicators of Quality

High quality programs have policies, procedures and administrative practices that support the early childhood workforce, families and children. Programs practice health and safety routines with integrity, provide ample age-appropriate materials and sustain appropriate group size and ratios for each classroom. Teaching approaches are developmentally appropriate and individualized for each child to be active, stimulating and engaging.

Professional development of the workforce is ongoing and intentional. Early childhood teachers and support staff participate regularly in training and learning opportunities to support their work with children from ages birth to five.

Families are included as valued partners and are invited to all aspects of care and education. Programs celebrate and explore the culture, backgrounds and individuality of children and families.

All of the indicators of quality combine together to create an environment that leads to nurturing and supportive early learning experiences for the youngest learners in our state.

How Does a Quality Rating and Improvement System Support Quality?

QRIS is a national movement in which states create their own systems to best meet the needs of programs, children and families in their states. Nevada's QRIS is called The Silver State Stars. This program strives to

create a culture of continuous quality improvement in the early childhood care and education community through a process of documentation, evidence-based assessment and individualized goal setting.

Nevada Silver State Stars History

The QRIS Vision

Quality early childhood education for all children in Nevada.

The QRIS Mission

Through respectful & strong state partnerships, Nevada's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) works to equitably improve and sustain the early childhood system through; quality coaching, accurate assessing, financial support, community engagement and advocacy for the early childhood community to benefit families of young children in Nevada.

Development & Implementation of Nevada's QRIS

- 2009 – Work group formed, comprised of early childhood education experts from more than 30 agencies in Nevada to develop the Silver State Stars QRIS.
- 2009 to 2011– Pilot program implemented with 24 child care centers in Southern Nevada chosen at random to participate.
- 2011 to 2012 – Revised pilot implemented. Revisions were made to the pilot and an additional 6 centers chosen to participate.
- 2013 – Silver State Stars QRIS finalized and launched statewide to child care centers.
- 2016 – Family Child Care model launched statewide.
- 2021 – Revisions made to Silver State Stars QRIS and new models for centers and FCCs launched.

Requirements for Participation

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal grant which states use to fund access to child care for families through the child care subsidy. Part of the CCDF is set aside to ensure that children are being cared for in high-quality environments. In Nevada, the CCDF quality funds are used to make the Silver State Stars possible, along with training and professional development for the early childhood workforce.

All licensed child care programs, both center and home based, that partner with the child care subsidy program are required to participate in QRIS.

For more information about child care subsidy participation and reimbursement rates, please contact The Las Vegas Urban League for Clark and Nye counties, and The Children's Cabinet for all other counties (contact information is available in the following Benefits of Participation section):

Benefits of Participation in QRIS

Child care centers and Family Child Care(FCC)/Group Family Child Care(GFCC) programs that are active in QRIS are eligible for the following benefits.

Tiered child care subsidy reimbursement rates

Programs with a higher star rating level are eligible for a higher reimbursement from child care subsidy, based on the ages of the children served, the setting in which the care is provided and the county in which the program is located.

For more information on reimbursement rates, please contact your local child care subsidy organization.

[Las Vegas Urban League](#) (for providers in Clark and Nye counties):

Phone: (702) 473-9400

[The Children's Cabinet](#) (all other counties):

Email: subsidy@childrenscabinet.org

Phone: (775) 856-6210

[T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nevada](#)

This is a scholarship opportunity for staff working in a QRIS participating program. It allows early care and education professionals to further their career by attaining a certificate, degree or credential in the field of early childhood education.

Phone: (775) 327-0680

Email: teachnevada@gmail.com

Early Childhood Support Network ([ECSN](#))

A network of trained and qualified substitutes who support QRIS participating programs to meet staffing needs.

Southern Nevada 702-513-8882

Northern Nevada 775-856-0125

Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood ([MCCYN-PLUS](#))

This program supports military families by providing reimbursement for child care when the child is enrolled in a QRIS participating program.

Early Childhood Mental Health Services (ECMHS)

This program offers consultation to program staff and families of children who are experiencing social and emotional challenges.

More information on ECMHS can be found here:

Southern Nevada 702-486-7764

Northern Nevada 775-688-1600

Support for Accreditation

Available in the form of reimbursement for programs striving for the 5 star level. OELD will reimburse for the cost of new accreditation or renewal. The following accreditation organizations are accepted:

[National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#)

[National Accreditation Commission \(NAC\)](#)

[National Early Childhood Program Accreditation \(NECPA\)](#)

[National Association of Family Child Care \(NAFCC\)](#)

Head Start and Early Head Start programs are considered accredited as grantees and do not need to provide evidence of accreditation. Other accreditation organizations will be considered upon request. OELD will determine if the accreditation organization is accepted for reimbursement.

To request reimbursement for accreditation costs, submit your payment invoice and W-9 to gris@doe.nv.gov.

Quality Improvement Grants

Grants and star rating increase bonuses are available to participating child care centers and FCC/GFCCs. These funds are used to purchase materials to support quality improvement for the program. The amount granted is dependent upon the total enrollment capacity of the program (see table below). With each coaching cycle, programs are eligible for a new quality improvement grant. The amount of funds awarded is reduced by 50% with each cycle.

Programs are eligible to access grant funds 6 months after receiving a star rating. Additionally, programs must have a quality improvement plan in place. Items purchased with grant funds must reflect the goals on the quality improvement plan. The QRIS coach will assist the program to ensure the purchased materials are in alignment with the program's goals.

Grant funds may not be used to purchase consumable items such as paper, paint, glue, etc. Other classroom materials are available from the following approved vendors.

[Constructive Playthings](#)

[Discount School Supply](#)

[Kaplan Early Learning Company](#)

[Lakeshore Learning Materials](#)

Star Rating Increase Bonus

Each time a child care center or FCC/GFCC increases their star rating level, they are eligible to receive a bonus grant. This grant is not used for classroom materials but is instead used to show staff appreciation in whichever way the program chooses.

The amount of the star rating increase bonus depends upon the total enrollment capacity of the program.

When a program receives their new star rating, if the rating level has increased, then the program will receive an email to notify the director of their eligibility for the bonus. The director will complete the grant request form and provide the program's W-9 to OELD to receive their funds.

Coaching

Child care centers, FCC/GFCCs and LEAs all receive the benefit of coaching from The Children's Cabinet QRIS coaching team.

QRIS Coaches

QRIS coaches are trained and experienced early childhood professionals who provide technical assistance, resources and on-site coaching to all active programs. Coaches support each program to achieve their greatest potential and to meet their quality improvement goals. Programs are assigned a QRIS coach upon being moved from the waitlist.

Coaches provide the following types of support:

- Technical assistance with gathering documentation for the required criteria
- Informing the program of their current cycle timeline and upcoming deadlines
- Providing resources to support the programmatic and business aspects of child care operations
- Providing Nevada Registry approved training
- Providing on-site coaching and consultation
- Support for developing the program's quality improvement plan
- Consultation for understanding the results of the ERS scores
- Technical assistance in completing grants paperwork and other forms

QRIS coaches are thought partners for programs in their quality improvement journey. They make recommendations, and support programs to identify areas of strength and potential areas for growth. They do not mandate specific goals or objectives for the programs they work with.

Coaching intensity is tailored to the individual needs of each program and can be adjusted as necessary throughout a rating period/coaching cycle based on the needs of the site. The intensity of coaching is determined by several factors, including the duration of the program's participation in QRIS, star ratings, staff turnover, and the goals and needs of the program.

For 4 and 5 star programs, the expectation is that coaches will provide fewer on-site coaching hours each month and make regular check-in phone calls, depending on the program's tenure in QRIS and ERS scores. This approach aligns with the QRIS goal of transitioning programs to internal coaching after achieving higher star ratings, allowing them to independently implement the quality improvement plan (QIP) developed in partnership with the QRIS coaches.

Internal Coaches

Child care centers and LEA programs are encouraged to designate an internal coach. This is an experienced staff member (often an administrator or lead teacher) who acts as the program's coach alongside the QRIS coach. Over time, as the program advances through the star rating levels, the internal coach assumes more responsibility for hands-on coaching, with the QRIS coach taking on more of a consultant and technical assistance role.

[More information on QRIS Coaching from The Children's Cabinet](#)

Recognition for Star Rating

When a program receives a rating, the director will receive a certificate, showing their star rating level and recognizing the program's commitment to quality. If the program has achieved a specialization badge, the certificate will have a branded specialization stamp.

Programs will receive a banner from their QRIS coach which can be displayed to identify the program as participating in quality improvement or having achieved or exceeded the high quality standards.

The Models and Rating (The R of QRIS)

Nevada is committed to honoring the individual and unique strengths of different early learning programs. We feel programs will be most successful in making quality improvements with a model geared toward their program type. For this reason, Silver State Stars currently has 3 different models:

The Child Care Center Model

The Family Child Care (FCC) Model *This model also applies to Group Family Child Care (GFCC) programs.*

Under these two models, star ratings are based on the following:

- Required Criteria
- Assessment Scores

The Local Education Agency (LEA) Model

Under this model, programs must be in compliance with all Nevada Ready! Pre-K requirements and are rated based on assessment scores.

Complete versions of all QRIS Models are available in English and Spanish on the [Nevada Department of Education Website](#).

The Child Care Center Model

This model is applicable to all enrolled child care centers, regardless of size or enrollment capacity. Under this model, centers are given a star rating based on the required criteria and Environment Rating Scale (ERS) scores.

For one star, the program must have a current child care license and a current contract with the local child care subsidy organization.

For two stars, the program must meet the above criteria. Additionally, all staff must be active on the Nevada Registry. New hires may provide documentation that they have begun the background check process. Finally, 25% of all classrooms must meet the QRIS group size and ratio requirements.

For three stars, the program must meet the above criteria. At this rating level, 50% of all classrooms must meet the QRIS group size and ratio requirements. Additionally, the program must achieve an average ERS score of 3.5 or higher, and no classroom may score below a 3.0.

For four stars, the program must meet the above criteria. At this rating level, 75% of all classrooms must meet the QRIS group size and ratio requirements. Additionally, the program must achieve an average ERS score of 4.0 or higher, and no classroom may score below a 3.5. The program must have a suspension and expulsion prevention policy that aligns with the Nevada Department of Education. Programs in the process of developing their policy are encouraged to read the [NDE guidelines](#).

For five stars, the program must meet the above criteria. At this rating level, 100% of all classrooms must meet the QRIS group size and ratio requirements. Additionally, the program must achieve an average ERS score of 4.5 or higher, and no classroom may score below a 4.0. The program must also be nationally accredited by an approved accreditation organization.

Group Size and Ratio

Under this model, special consideration is given to group size and ratio. The QRIS guidelines for group size and ratio are based on national best practices in early childhood and are more strict than child care licensing requirements.

One month before your assessment window, you will be asked to complete the [Group Size and Ratio Worksheet](#). You must complete one page for each classroom in your program. The data entered is based on the actual attendance, *not enrollment capacity*, of one week chosen at random from the past month.

Enter the week's attendance on the line that corresponds to the age of the children in the room for the morning and the afternoon. If the room splits into multiple groups for the day, use a different sheet for each group.

For mixed-age infant/toddler rooms, enter the attendance data on the line that corresponds to the age of the youngest child in the group.

For mixed-age preschool, enter the attendance data on the Mixed Age Group line. Include the exact ages of children in the room.

Enter the number of teaching staff present each day.

Your QRIS coach will check your data entry and complete the boxes on the bottom for group size and ratio.

The Family Child Care Model

This model applies to all enrolled Family Child Care (FCC) and Group Family Child Care (GFCC) programs. Under this model, FCC/GFCC programs are given a rating based on the required criteria and ERS scores.

For one star, the FCC must have a current child care license and a current contract with the local child care subsidy organization.

For two stars, the FCC must meet the above criteria. Additionally, the FCC provider and any staff, if applicable, must be active on the Nevada Registry. New hires may provide documentation that they have begun the background check process.

For three stars, the FCC must meet the above criteria. Additionally, the FCC must achieve an average ERS score of 3.5 or higher.

For four stars, the FCC must meet the above criteria. Additionally, the FCC must achieve an average ERS score of 4.0 or higher. The FCC must have a suspension and expulsion prevention policy that aligns with the Nevada Department of Education. FCCs in the process of developing their policy are encouraged to read the [NDE guidelines](#).

For five stars, the FCC must meet the above criteria. Additionally, the FCC must achieve an average ERS score of 4.5 or higher. The FCC must also be nationally accredited by The National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC).

Reviewing the Required Criteria

When a center or FCC/GFCC program is due to be rated, the coach will assist the program to gather the required documentation and upload it to Easy Folio, an online file sharing system. *Note, the LEA Model does not require documentation of required criteria.* This must be completed one month before the program's assessment window.

Do not upload documents to Easy Folio earlier than one month before the assessment window.

OELD will review the documentation and determine if it meets the criteria. After ERS scores are finalized, programs are given a 2-week grace period to correct any documentation or add any missing documentation before they are rated. Ratings are valid for 24 months.

The Local Education Agency (LEA) Model

This model is applicable to all Nevada Ready! Pre-K (NR!PK) programs within public schools, as well as programs funded through the Early Childhood Innovative Literacy Program (ECILP) grant. These programs are license-exempt and have their own requirements for student eligibility and enrollment. Ratings in the LEA model are based on compliance with the NR!PK program requirements, and the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) scores.

For one star, there is no cutoff score.

For two stars, the program must achieve an average score of 3.5 – 3.99 and no classroom may score below 3.00.

For three stars, the program must achieve an average score of 4.00 – 4.49 and no classroom may score below 3.5.

For four stars, the program must achieve an average score of 4.50 – 4.99 and no classroom may score below 4.00.

For five stars, the program must achieve an average score of over 5.00 and no classroom may score below 4.50.

Some NR!PK programs are housed within community-based child care centers through subgrants from The United Way of Southern Nevada or The United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra. These programs are required to comply with all NR!PK standards and are assessed when the center is due for assessment. Ratings are given to the center, not the individual NR!PK classroom.

Quality Improvement Tribal Model (QITM) Pilot

In 2021 Nevada tribal leaders and community members came together with The Children's Cabinet to research and develop a quality improvement model specifically for Nevada's tribal child care programs. The result of this work was the QITM, a model for quality improvement that recognizes the unique strengths of each tribal child care program and allows each program to work toward meaningful quality improvement.

Under QITM, tribal programs first work through a process of self-evaluation. This includes collecting surveys from families currently served in the program, while each teacher completes a self-assessment to evaluate their teaching practices. From there, the program creates a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP),

outlining specific goals and the steps to achieve them. Teachers also create CIPs and set goals for themselves. Goals are set and achieved on a 24 month cycle.

CIPs are a pathway toward quality improvement based on the following quality domains determined by tribal early childhood leaders:

- Native Language Revitalization and Cultural Practices
- Maintaining Health and Safety Practices
- Positive and Nurturing Interactions
- Learning Activities
- Language and Literacy
- Professional Development
- Program Structure
- Family Engagement

In 2023, the model began a pilot phase. In late 2024, tribal early childhood leaders will meet again to evaluate the effectiveness and success of the pilot and make changes as needed.

QRIS Cycle Timeline (The I of QRIS)

Quality improvement is a continuous and ongoing process that is individualized to each program. Meaningful quality improvement takes place only when programs are provided with enough time and resources to achieve their goals.

Center and FCC Models

For the center and FCC models, the QRIS cycle timeline is the same. Programs are coached on a 24-month cycle, then given a formal assessment and a new rating.

Programs that are new to QRIS must begin with the enrollment process, followed by an onboarding phase called Steps to Stars.

Enrollment

After completing the [QRIS Enrollment Form](#) and submitting, the program's participation with the child care subsidy program must be verified. Once this is confirmed, the program will receive an email stating that the program has been placed on the waitlist. The length of time a program spends on the waitlist depends on coaching capacity and may take some time.

Steps to Stars

When a program is moved from the waitlist and made active, the first 6 months are an introductory period called Steps to Stars. This is a period of onboarding, orientation and preparation for full participation in QRIS. During Steps to Stars, the center or FCC/GFCC director can expect the following:

1. You will receive an email from the Office of Early Learning and Development informing you that you have been removed from the waitlist and are now active in the Silver State Stars QRIS.
2. You will receive a call from your QRIS coach who will introduce him/herself and arrange for a visit.
3. Your coach will visit your program and have you sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). They will also provide you with the ERS tools and "All About" books appropriate to your program.

4. You will be invited to a virtual training session provided by OELD, Introduction to QRIS. This training reviews the process and expectations of QRIS, and also explains how assessment and rating works.
5. You will be encouraged to attend Introduction to Pyramid Model Training.
6. You will be encouraged to attend Introduction to ERS Training. This training provides an in-depth look at the Environment Rating Scale tools and supports center directors and FCC/GFCCs to understand what the assessors are looking at and how the tool is scored.
7. Your coach will collect specific pieces of documentation from you. For example, for centers, the coach will collect a program information sheet with the names of the staff, ages of children served, etc.
8. Your coach will support you with a log in to Easy Folio, an online file keeping system where you can upload documentation to show that your program meets the required criteria. Your coach will support you to learn how to do this.

During the Steps to Stars phase, your program will not receive active coaching. Instead, the QRIS coach will only provide technical assistance and reminders of upcoming trainings and deadlines.

At the end of the 6 month Steps to Stars period, your program will be formally assessed and receive a baseline star rating. This will come as an email from OELD.

Your coach will meet with you to review the results of your assessment and discuss the ERS reports. Together with the coach, you will develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The goals that you set on this plan will inform the direction of coaching and support for the 24-month coaching cycle.

The first 24 month coaching cycle is called the Initial Coaching cycle. Each cycle following is called a Maintenance Cycle. For example, Maintenance 1, Maintenance 2, etc. There is no limit on the number of possible Maintenance Cycles for a program.

Rating Review Period

During the program's assessment window, active coaching will be paused. During this time, OELD will review the program's documentation of the required criteria and the assessment team will conduct formal observations of the program.

The rating review period will close once the program has received their star rating. At this time, active coaching will resume.

Program Changes

When a change happens in a child care program, it may or may not effect the program's coaching cycle and assessment period.

Child Care Center Change in Director

A change in director has no impact on the program's cycle timeline. It is recommended that new directors complete the following trainings.

- Introduction to QRIS
- Introduction to ERS
- Introduction to Pyramid Model

If the director has previously worked at a QRIS participating program and has already completed the trainings, there is no need to complete them again. The new director may provide a copy of their training certificate or NV Registry Professional Development summary to their QRIS coach.

Child Care Center Change in Location/Facility

When a program moves to a new facility, the effect on the QRIS cycle timeline depends on licensing.

If the program receives a new child care license number, the program will need to start the QRIS process over at the Steps to Stars phase.

If the program does not receive a new child care license, the program will continue its current rating period and cycle timeline.

FCC Program Changing to Child Care Center

If an FCC/Group FCC program transitions to a child care center, the program is effectively exiting one QRIS model and entering a different model. For this reason, the program will start over at the Steps to Stars phase.

LEA Model

NR!PK programs housed within LEAs have a unique cycle timeline, although some similarities exist between the LEA model and the center and FCC/GFCC models.

Enrollment and Pre-Assessment

Programs must submit an [LEA Enrollment Form](#) and be placed on the waitlist. Once a program is removed from the waitlist, they receive a pre-assessment in the fall of the year they are enrolled. No rating is given at this time. The purpose of the pre-assessment is to establish a baseline for coaching and quality improvement.

After two years of coaching, the program receives a post-assessment in the spring of the second year. This is when the program receives a star rating. This allows program administrators and QRIS coaches to compare the pre and post assessment results and assess the program's quality.

LEA Cycle

Going forward, the program will have a 24 month cycle of coaching. At the end of the 24 months, the program will be formally assessed and re-rated every 2 years in the spring.

Assessment

The Silver State Stars uses formal assessments to collect a snapshot of the experience of the children in the program. Results of formal assessments are used to identify each program's strengths and potential areas for growth, and to support the process of ongoing quality improvement.

The Silver State Stars uses the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) as a formal assessment tool. The ERS is a nationally used, research-based, reliable tool for evaluating quality in early childhood settings. Nevada's QRIS currently uses the following ERS tools for assessment:

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3), for use in classrooms where the children are ages 3-5 years.

Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-3), for use in classrooms where the children are ages birth-2 years.

Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-3), for use in FCC/GFCC programs.

Each ERS tool assesses the physical environment, personal care routines, language and literacy/books, learning activities, interactions and program structure. More information about the ERS tools can be found on the website for the Environment Rating Scales Institute: [ERS Institute](#)

Formal and Informal Assessments

Assessments are conducted by trained and reliable assessors from the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) and Early Learning Insights.

Formal assessments are conducted on the following schedule:

For centers and FCCs: at the end of the 6 month Steps to Stars phase, and then every 24 months.

For LEAs: a pre-assessment conducted in the fall after the program is enrolled and made active, then every two years in the spring.

In addition to conducting formal assessments, assessors conduct informal practice assessments on an ongoing basis to maintain reliability with the ERS tools and to provide training for QRIS coaches. Programs may request to have an informal practice assessment conducted at their location at any time. Although formal results will not be shared after a practice assessment, the assessor will provide a summary to the QRIS coach, highlighting the strengths and areas for potential growth, who will review it with the program.

Assessment Protocol

When your program is due for assessment, you will receive an email from OELD one month before your assessment window. You will not know the exact date of your assessment. However, you will know the 30-day window for your assessment. All documentation for the required criteria should be uploaded to Easy Folio one month before your assessment window.

Next, the schedule coordinator for the assessment team will contact you to gather some information about daily schedule, number of classrooms and ages of children served.

For centers and FCC/GFCCs, the director may select two blackout dates, during which the assessor will not come to the program. These can be used for non-typical days. For example, a field trip, an outdoor water play day, picture day, etc. Staff absences are not a valid use of a blackout day, as the experience of the children on that day will still be typical of a day in the program.

During the assessment, the assessor will not interact with any staff or children. They will remain with the same group for 3 hours and will not provide any feedback during that time. The exception is if the assessor observes an immediate safety concern, at which point they will step in.

Please allow at least 3 weeks after your assessment is complete to receive your results. Your QRIS coach will review the results with you.

The 50% Rule

Assessments will be conducted on 50% of classrooms in child care centers, meaning 50% of ECERS and 50% of ITERS rooms, selected at random.

ECERS: 50% of rooms serving children ages 3-5 will be selected at random to be assessed, rounded up if there is an odd number.

ITERS: 50% of rooms serving children ages birth-3 will be selected at random to be assessed, rounded up if there is an odd number. Note: *if the program has one or more infant (birth-11 months) rooms, at least one will always be assessed.* For the remainder of the birth-2 rooms, 50% will be selected at random to be assessed, rounded up if there is an odd number.

FCCERS: The 50% rule does not apply to FCC and GFCC programs. If the GFCC has the children split into two groups, both will be assessed.

The 50% Rule for LEA Programs

Some NR!PK or ECLIP LEA classrooms are located on the same site as other Pre-K classrooms which are not funded through NR!PK or ECILP. When this happens, the NR!PK or ECILP classroom will always be assessed at the end of each 24 month cycle. If there are multiple NR!PK/ECILP classrooms, 50% will be selected at random for assessment. Additionally, 50% of the other classrooms will be chosen at random to be assessed, rounded up if there is an odd number.

Special education early childhood classrooms not funded through NR!PK also follow the 50% rule and are included in the average score of all classrooms to calculate the star rating.

If a self-contained autism classroom is on site, they may be selected at random for assessment. However, these rooms are not considered in the average assessment scores and are not part of the star rating.

Some NR!PK classrooms are located in community-based child care centers. In this case, at least one NR!PK classroom will always be assessed. Any additional NR!PK classrooms will be part of the 50% ECERS assessments chosen at random.

Training on the ERS

The assessment team provides ongoing training on the ERS tools to support programs in achieving higher levels of quality. All center directors and FCC owner/directors are provided the opportunity to attend Introduction to ERS Training during the Steps to Stars phase, and when a new director is hired for a participating center. Additionally, trainings on the ERS tools for staff are offered on an ongoing basis.

The calendar of trainings is scheduled quarterly. More information on the current training calendar is available from your QRIS coach.

Specialization Badges

The Nevada Silver State Stars aims to recognize that different programs achieve quality in unique ways. As a way of offering alternate pathways for recognizing high-quality programs, QRIS is currently developing multiple specialization badges.

Child care centers and FCC/GFCCs are eligible to earn specialization badges. Currently, one badge is available, with plans to develop others in the future.

During each program's rating review cycle, OELD will review any documentation uploaded to Easy Folio to show that the program has met the criteria for a specific badge. As with all rating reviews, programs are given a two-week grace period after assessment scores are finalized to correct any errors or upload

any missing documentation. Programs are notified if they have been awarded the badge in the same email which communicates the program's new star rating level.

With each cycle, programs must maintain the criteria required to achieve the badge and provide updated documentation during each rating review period.

Infant-Toddler Specialization Badge

This badge is available to programs demonstrating that they have met high-quality standards in infant-toddler care. The criteria for the infant-toddler specialization are below.

Child care centers:

- A safe sleep policy is in the parent and staff handbooks and is posted near the infant sleeping areas.
- Administration and all infant/toddler teaching staff have 6 hours of infant/toddler specific training within the past 12 months.
- All assessed ITERS classrooms score 3.0 or higher.
- Breastfeeding information is available for parents to review and take home.
- The program supports breast feeding by providing a comfortable, private place for the parent.
- 100% of infant/toddler classrooms meet the QRIS group size and ratio requirements.

FCC/GFCC:

- A safe sleep policy is in the parent and staff handbooks and is posted near the infant sleeping areas.
- Family child carer provider (and staff, if applicable) has 6 hours of infant/toddler specific training within the past 12 months.
- FCCERS overall scores are 3.50 or higher.
- Breastfeeding information is available for parents to review and take home.
- The FCC supports breast feeding by providing a comfortable, private place for the parent.

Programs who achieve the infant-toddler specialization badge are awarded 4 infant-toddler materials kits which include:

- One ASQ kit (English or Spanish)
- One Shapes Discovery Kit
- One Toddler Story Telling Kit
- One set of Giant Soft Blocks

Requesting Changes to the Cycle Timeline

There are certain circumstances in which a program may need to request a change or adjustment to the coaching cycle and timeline. The QRIS coach is available to discuss the request and support the program in completing the appropriate form.

Request for Re-assessment

This request can be submitted when a program would like a new formal assessment in the middle of a coaching cycle. This request may be submitted a minimum 6 months after the previous formal assessment.

Each program may receive one formal re-assessment at no cost per cycle. Additional re-assessments will be billed to the program.

A re-assessment always results in an updated star rating based on the new ERS scores. If the program scores lower than the previous assessment, this will result in a lower star rating or no change in star rating.

Request to be Re-Rated

This request can be submitted when a program has made changes to the required criteria and wishes to be re-rated. For example, the program has updated all staff to be active in the Nevada Registry and would like to be re-rated.

This request can be submitted at any time during the 24-month cycle.

Request to Extend Assessment/Coaching Cycle

This request is submitted when a program needs to request an extension on their assessment window. Submitting this form does not guarantee that the extension will be granted. Each extension request is considered on an individual basis.

The following are valid reasons for submitting an extension request:

- Sudden damage to the child care or FCC/GFCC facility prompting disruption in daily routine or closure
- Construction on the child care or FCC/GFCC facility causing disruption in daily routine or closure
- More than 50% of staff have left the program

The following are generally not valid reasons for submitting an extension request:

- Documentation of required criteria not prepared
- Less than 50% of staff have left the program

A typical extension is 2-3 months. Every effort is made to keep the program's rating cycle as close as possible to 24 months.

Partner Organizations (The S of QRIS)

The Nevada Silver State Stars is a collaborative network of early childhood care and education partner organizations. Each one plays an important role in ensuring the integrity of QRIS and providing quality care for all Nevada's children.

Las Vegas Urban League and The Children's Cabinet Child Care Subsidy Programs:

These organizations support families in accessing affordable and quality child care with funding based on the family size and income. These organizations contract with providers who serve families receiving child care subsidy and provide payment to providers for the cost of care.

The Children’s Cabinet QRIS Coaches:

QRIS coaches are early childhood professionals who come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences in the field of early care and education. They undergo extensive training on coaching practices, quality in early childhood programs and are reliable in the use of the ERS tools.

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and Early Learning Insight:

These organizations provide the required assessments using the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Tools. Assessors are early childhood professionals who are reliable ERS observers. They conduct formal assessments for each program at the end of the coaching cycle. Additionally, they conduct informal assessments to support the coaches’ understanding of the tools and provide opportunities for feedback to programs in between formal assessments.

Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS):

Funding for the Nevada Silver State Stars comes from the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to the DWSS. From there, the funds are distributed to other partner organizations including The Children’s Cabinet and Las Vegas Urban League for child care subsidy and OELD for QRIS. The role of DWSS is to provide stable funding to partner organizations for implementation.

Nevada Department of Education (NDE) Office of Early Learning and Development (OELD):

OELD provides administrative oversight for QRIS and creates policies and guidelines for providers and partners to achieve success. Additionally, OELD rates programs at the end of each coaching cycle and maintains accurate data on QRIS.

Nevada Institute for Children’s Policy and Research (NICRP):

NICRP supports the integrity of QRIS by conducting an annual program evaluation and making recommendations for improvement. Each year in the spring NICRP conducts a survey of participating directors, teachers and QRIS coaches. Additionally, they provide consultation on data collection and evaluation as needed.

A Culture of Continuous Quality Improvement

The partner organizations of the Silver State Stars strive to create a culture of continuous quality improvement across early childhood settings throughout the state. QRIS values the individual culture of each program and strives for equitable distribution of resources among providers. Quality is not a fixed point, but an ongoing process of reflection and growth that early childhood programs undertake for the benefit of children and families.

Nevada QRIS Team

[Office of Early Learning and Development](#)

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