



QRIS POSITION PAPER - 12/17/12

The CT Child Care Association (CCCA) strongly supports the need for and concept of a quality rating scale for child care providers in CT. Our members consistently strive to provide the highest quality of care and education for young children. Tools that both aid in the improvement process as well as recognize the high standards that already exist are welcomed enthusiastically.

CCCA does maintain certain reservations about the process, timing, financing and implementation of the program. Most of them stem from a lack of information and detail provided to date. While the work groups and committees were established in an effort to include varied agencies and experts, representation by members of private, licensed providers was very small and for "taxpaying" private, licensed providers it was non-existent. Licensed private providers represent 80% of childcare providers and almost all will be affected by QRIS. This has left privately funded programs at a disadvantage in obtaining information vital to budgeting and planning processes.

5 Standards of Quality - CCCA strongly supports those proposed by the workgroup. The efforts to mirror these categories with those utilized by other organizations and accrediting bodies is appreciated as it is anticipated that duplicated or conflicting criteria will be minimized. However, the absence of details in the practical criteria that will be required makes it extremely difficult to evaluate the ability for privately funded programs to prepare and meet the standards. Our funds are fixed, and until details are presented we are unable to comment on viability and feasibility of the proposals. As specific criteria are developed, we urge that this is done with consideration to: 1) Is real value add by the criteria?, 2) Does the criteria accommodate different philosophies of education? and 3) Is achieving the criteria realistic from a cost perspective. These are considerations not of ideology, but of viability.

Funding - Physical upgrades, staff education, family events and outreach require financial resources, in some cases significant amounts. CCCA supports the inclusion of financial incentives that have been proposed. However, our concern is that all centers, including private licensed centers, have equal access to these resources. Programs must be able to budget for future needs and will need clarification of funding available to sustain improvements over time.

Ratings and Accreditation- We endorse the block rating system proposed. Details are needed to determine the criteria enabling a program to move up in the rating process. We are concerned that a monopoly might be granted to the NAEYC and that levels 2-4 might require centers to actively participate in the NAEYC accreditation process with no alternative pathway considered. Our programs use a variety of criteria to determine participation in professional organizations including cost, philosophy, time investment, reporting systems. There exist a variety of accrediting bodies that may

prove better options for specific programs. Specifically we believe that both the NECPA and NEC should be considered. Since the goal is to improve the overall quality of programs in CT, allowing other accreditations will encourage more centers to "step-up" their programs. Also, there may exist very real cost and implementation concerns that lead a program to decline accreditation altogether. A pathway to higher ratings should be possible for these programs.

CCCA is supportive and excited about the goals and potential of the QRIS to improve the quality of child care programs in CT. Our concerns revolve around direct, accurate and complete information in order that our programs be in a position of assessing, planning and budgeting in a timely and efficient manner. Almost all private, licensed providers will be affected by QRIS, in multiple ways, and we urge those who will be implementing the new system to consider the needs and impacts upon our programs.