



Implementing QUALITYstarsNY

QUALITYstarsNY is the framework for recognizing and improving the quality and effectiveness of early learning and development programs in New York. QUALITYstarsNY, like other quality rating and improvement systems throughout the country offer clear, organized ways to assess, improve and communicate the quality of early learning and development programs. When QUALITYstarsNY is fully implemented statewide:

- ★ children in NY will enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn;
- ★ early childhood educators and programs will be supported to provide excellent services that are recognized for their quality; and
- ★ parents will have a simple way of learning about the quality of their early learning and development options so they can make the best choices for their children.

2010 and 2011

QUALITYstarsNY was field-tested in thirteen communities across the state in 2010. The reports on the field test and its evaluation are available at www.qualitystarsny.org. Field test results have been used to revise and improve aspects of QUALITYstarsNY. In 2011, the QUALITYstarsNY standards were revised based on the field test and standards for school-age programs began to be developed.

In 2011, over half (138) of the centers, schools and homes that participated in the field test and developed quality improvement plans (QIPs) were supported to continue implementing those plans, with primary support from federal funding provided by the NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The OCFS funds specifically support professional development for field test participants; these *Quality Scholars* funds are allocated in accord with program QIPs. With private funding in Buffalo, 8 additional programs were added to the project and benefited from the components of quality rating and improvement. Additionally, together, all of the programs in Buffalo engaged in an innovative strategy, modeling a peer support network.

Approximately 90% of the work to implement QUALITYstarsNY has been funded with federal dollars through both OCFS and the ECAC, and 10% through private philanthropy.

2012 and 2013

The QUALITYstarsNY center/school- and family-based standards are complete and posted on the QUALITYstarsNY website.

The NYS Education Department (SED) agreed to allocate funds from its federal Race to the Top grant to support implementation of QUALITYstarsNY in 2012-2014. About 300 early learning and development programs in the communities around persistently low achieving public schools will be involved. The focus in 2012 is expected to be recruitment of program participants and outreach and engagement of partners to work with these programs to conduct assessments, develop QIPs and support implementing those plans. Ratings of programs in these communities will not be published until 2014.

In 2012, with private funding, QUALITYstarsNY will be implemented in two communities on Long Island, again enabling new programs to participate in QUALITYstarsNY. The learning community model will be replicated in these two communities as well.

Implementing QUALITYstarsNY through 2012 is supported entirely by time-limited federal funds and private philanthropy. ECAC funding will expire in 2013 and SED funds will decline in 2013 and end in August 2014. State investment is necessary for QUALITYstarsNY to continue.

QUALITYstarsNY has adopted the State's 10-region structure for economic development to guide implementation, meaning that whenever possible, activity will occur in each of the regions as implementation proceeds. A multi-year implementation plan and budget have been developed; the expected total annual investment needed for full implementation statewide is approximately \$100 million.

Implementation of QUALITYstarsNY is proceeding with emphasis on readiness, quality improvement and development of necessary infrastructure.

Readiness. QUALITYstarsNY is currently implementing three readiness training workshops designed to help programs become more familiar with the standards and using the Environment Rating Scales for self-assessment and program improvement. The workshops are entitled:

- ★ *Introduction to QUALITYstarsNY*
- ★ *Self-Assessment: Preparing for Program Improvement (using the Environment Rating Scales)*
- ★ *First Steps for Quality Improvement*

24 trainers were trained to facilitate the three workshops and they will deliver 90 sessions across the state in all 10 regions. These sessions have the potential to reach 2,000 programs and providers. This work is being coordinated by the Early Care and Learning Council.

Quality improvement. In support of quality improvement efforts, OCFS allocated \$400,000 towards Quality Scholars in 2012. The peer mentoring network continues in Buffalo and will begin on Long Island. Quality Improvement Specialists assist participating program staff to identify high quality and tailored professional development that is designed to advance program quality according to Quality Improvement Plans.

Beginning in 2011, some of the child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) funded by OCFS have allocated a portion of their technical assistance resources to support programs that are implementing QIPs and several CCR&Rs are delivering readiness sessions. Other publicly funded entities, such as the Early Childhood Direction Centers and BOCES can also play a key role in contributing support to the implementation of Quality Improvement Plans in the future. Further integration of these potential partners requires consideration of current contracts, and the length of time necessary to revise, approve, and issue new RFP's. In the case of our current CCR&R partners, change in state law is needed to permit a new kind of partnership model.

Infrastructure development. The QUALITYstarsNY data system will be completed in 2012. The QUALITYstarsNY data system will automatically import workforce data from the *New York Works for Children* Registry. The Registry is expected to be completed in 2012 as well. Once both the Registry and the QUALITYstarsNY data system are inter-operational, programs anywhere in the state will be able to apply online, develop a preliminary Quality Improvement Plan and estimate their QUALITYstarsNY rating. QI specialists will be able to enter and track their work with programs.

For information about QUALITYstarsNY please visit our website at:

www.qualitystarsny.org

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