

California Begins Comprehensive Early Learning System Reform



California recently began a process to create a high-quality early learning system that will get children ready to learn and help close the achievement gap before they start school. Senate Bill 1629

(Steinberg) – passed by the state Legislature and signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2008 – established a committee to develop the policy and implementation plan for a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early learning programs in California.



California's QRIS process will lay the groundwork for maximizing current and future investments in an

early learning system that raises the quality of early education programs and improves children's school readiness. The process will also put the state in the position to take full advantage of new federal early learning funds.

California's Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee

The Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee is a new state body that will develop a proposed policy and implementation plan to improve the quality of early education programs. This includes a quality rating scale to help parents make informed decisions about programs for their children, and a funding model to help existing and future programs reach and maintain higher levels of quality.



The Committee held its first meeting on March 23, 2009. The Committee will provide an interim report to the Legislature and Governor by December 31, 2009, and a final report one year later.

More information about California's Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee, including a list of committee members, highlights of past meetings and agenda for upcoming meetings, is available on the Advisory Committee website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/sb1629committee.asp>.

What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)?

- QRIS is a systemic approach to supporting and rewarding early care and education programs that provide higher quality and therefore better child outcomes.
- Seventeen states are already operating a statewide QRIS.
- Critical elements of a QRIS include:
 - standards that lay out the key research-based indicators of quality in early childhood settings;
 - accountability to ensure that early learning programs meet quality standards;
 - program and provider outreach and support, including training, technical assistance and mentoring;
 - financial incentives to encourage programs to pursue higher levels of quality; and
 - parent and consumer education about the quality of early learning programs, potentially through a five-star quality rating scale.



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