

# The Quest for Quality in Early Childhood

Inclusion Institute  
May 2010

Virginia Buysse Kelly Maxwell  
Elena Soukakou Pam Winton  
Deb Cassidy Beth Rous



# What We Already Know.....



- Substantial evidence shows causal link between program quality & developmental outcomes
- This has spawned a quality improvement movement in the U.S.

But, What Do We Mean  
By Quality?


# Intentional Teaching & Intervening

---



# Emerging Questions About Program Quality

# What Do We Mean By High Quality Inclusion?

 April 2009


## Early Childhood Inclusion


**A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

**T**oday an ever-increasing number of infants and young children with and without disabilities play, develop, and learn together in a variety of places – homes, early childhood programs, neighborhoods, and other community-based settings. The notion that young children with disabilities and their families are full members of the community reflects societal values about promoting opportunities for development and learning and a sense of belonging for every child. It also reflects a position against previous educational practices of separating and isolating children with disabilities. Over time, in combination with certain regulations and protections under the law, these values and societal views regarding children birth to 8 with disabilities and their families have come to be known as early childhood inclusion.<sup>1</sup> The most far-reaching effect of federal legislation on inclusion enacted over the past three decades has been to fundamentally change the way in which early childhood services ideally can be organized and delivered.<sup>2</sup> However, because inclusion takes many different forms and implementation is influenced by a

wide variety of factors, questions persist about the precise meaning of inclusion and its implications for policy, practice, and potential outcomes for children and families.

The lack of a shared national definition has contributed to misunderstandings about inclusion. DEC and NAEYC recognize that having a common understanding of what inclusion means is fundamentally important for determining what types of practices and supports are necessary to achieve high quality inclusion. This DEC/NAEYC joint position statement offers a definition of early childhood inclusion. The definition was designed not as a litmus test for determining whether a program can be considered inclusive, but rather, as a blueprint for identifying the key components of high quality inclusive programs. In addition, this document offers recommendations for how the position statement should be used by families, practitioners, administrators, policy makers, and others to improve early childhood services.

 **Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children**  
27 Fort Meade Road | Montclair, NJ 08004  
Phone 408.543.0872 | Fax 408.543.0887  
Email [dec@ceped.org](mailto:dec@ceped.org) | Web [www.ceped.org](http://www.ceped.org)

 **naeyc**  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
1323 L Street NW, Suite 500 | Washington, DC 20005-4101  
Phone 202.232.8777 | Toll-Free 800.424.2460 | Fax 202.328.1946  
Email [narep@naeyc.org](mailto:narep@naeyc.org) | Web [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)



# What Practices Define High Quality for Children from Diverse Cultural & Linguistic Backgrounds?



# Do Quality Frameworks Reflect Needs of Diverse Young Learners & Their Families?

---

licensing

DAP

program  
standards

QRIS

accreditation  
criteria

---



# The Evolving Definition of Program Quality

A case in point  
NAEYC's position  
statements on DAP  
from 1987-2009

## POSITION STATEMENT

**naeyc**

### **Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8**

Adopted 2009

A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

The purpose of this position statement is to promote excellence in early childhood education by providing a framework for best practice. Grounded both in the research on child development and learning and in the knowledge base regarding educational effectiveness, the framework outlines practice that promotes young children's optimal learning and development. Since its first adoption in 1986, this framework has been known as *developmentally appropriate practice*.<sup>1</sup>

The profession's responsibility to promote quality in the care and education of young children compels us to revisit regularly the validity and currency of our core knowledge and positions, such as this one on issues of practice. Does the position need modification in light of a changed context? Is there new knowledge to inform the statement? Are there aspects of the existing statement that have given rise to misunderstandings and misconceptions that need correcting?

Over the several years spent in developing this revision, NAEYC invited the comment of early childhood educators with experience and expertise from infancy to the primary grades, including

a late 2006 convening of respected leaders in the field. The result of this broad gathering of views is this updated position statement, which addresses the current context and the relevant knowledge base for developmentally appropriate practice and seeks to convey the nature of such practice clearly and usefully.

This statement is intended to complement NAEYC's other position statements on practice, which include *Early Learning Standards and Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation*, as well as the *Code of Ethical Conduct* and *NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria*.<sup>2</sup>

**Note:** Throughout this statement, the terms *teacher*, *practitioner*, and *educator* are variously used to refer to those working in the early childhood field. The word *teacher* is always intended to refer to any adult responsible for the direct care and education of a group of children in any early childhood setting. Included are not only classroom teachers but also infant/toddler caregivers, family child care providers, and specialists in other disciplines who fulfill the role of teacher. In more instances, the term *practitioner* is intended to also include a program's administrators. *Educators* is intended to also include college and university faculty and other teacher trainers.

Copyright © 2009 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children

# Quest for Quality Panelists

---

- QRIS – Kelly Maxwell
  - Measuring inclusion quality –  
Elena Soukakou
  - Professional Development – Pam Winton
-

# Quest for Quality Reactants

---

- Beth Rous
  - Deb Cassidy
-

# What is a QRIS?

---

- Common Elements
    - Quality standards
    - Process for assessing/monitoring standards
    - Outreach and support to programs
    - Financial incentives
    - Consumer awareness
-



# Special Needs

---

- 8 of 26 states address for centers
  - 6 of 26 states address for family child care homes
    - Specialized training
    - Screening procedures
    - Planning for children with special needs
    - Documentation of plans & activities
    - Integration of children with peers
    - Environmental accommodations
-

# Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

---

- 5 of 26 states address for centers
  - 3 of 26 address for family child care homes
    - Communication in families' home languages
    - Staff training (Louisiana)
    - Environment and materials reflect each child's family and culture (Indiana)
-

# Future Directions

---

- QRIS as a framework
  - “Universal Design”
    - Broaden the stakeholders
    - Common definitions
-



# Resource

---

- <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre>
  - Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations
  - State Profiles

# Three Issues in Measuring Dimensions of Quality in Inclusive Programs

Elena P. Soukakou, D. Phil.

- Challenges in measuring quality in inclusive classrooms



# Challenges

---

- High quality inclusion reflects a broad, complex system of practices
  - Lack of consensus on dimensions of high quality inclusive practices
  - Inadequacy of existing quality standards and measures
-

“Young children with disabilities can experience low quality in classes that are otherwise rated as being of high quality”  
(Wolery et al., 2000)

# The Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)

---

- Structured observation
  - 1-7 pt Likert-type scale
  - 11 items
  - Observation focus → Inclusive classroom
-

# ICP Items

---

1. Adaptation of space and materials
  2. Adult involvement in peer interactions
  3. Adult guidance of children's play
  4. Conflict resolution
  5. Membership
  6. Adult-child social interactions
  7. Support for social communication
  8. Adaptation of group activities
  9. Transitions between activities
  10. Feedback
  11. Planning and monitoring children's individual needs and goals
-

# Development of the ICP

---

1. Exploratory research
  2. Conceptualization
  3. Item generation
  4. Expert review
  5. Piloting
  6. Validation
-



# 4<sup>th</sup> Challenge

---



## “Inclusive adaptations”

“Practices which *deliberately adapt* the classroom’s environment, activities and instruction in ways that encourage **participation** and **active engagement** in the group, through **adjustments** that might differ from child to child”

# Example Indicator 1

---

- *Adults monitor children's involvement in play and when needed, help individual children to become involved (E.g. adults help children find toys that are appropriate for their age and level; suggest games and activities; redirect child from self stimulatory behaviors to more purposeful play). (O)*
-

# Example Indicator 2

---

- *Adults **deliberately** organize the physical space (including materials/ equipment) during the day to **encourage peer interaction** (E.g. teacher adds a chair to computer area for child who is standing and watching a peer playing; adult sets-up circle area to encourage children to read together; adult takes out more puppets to encourage other children to join the puppet area; adult repositions child on wheelchair so that she can face her peers). (O)*
-

# Example Indicator 3

---

- *Children's engagement in group activities is most of the time active and intentional (E.g. child finger-paints showing interest and motivation; child actively follows song rhymes in group; child actively traces name on paper).*
-

# 3 Issues in Measuring Inclusive Classroom Quality

---

- 1. Balance of indicators of general and specific relevance
  - 2. Consideration of outcomes that inform practices
  - 3. Differentiated use of quality indicators for program quality assessment and professional development
-

INCLUSION INSTITUTE 2010 SPECIAL FEATURE

MODERATORS



Dr. Sharon Hope Irwin Senior Researcher of SpecialLink, the National Centre for Child Care Inclusion

bio



Dr. Elena Soukakou Postdoctoral Fellow, FPG Child Development Institute

bio

Measuring the Quality of Inclusion

Posted by Early Childhood Community at Mar 23, 2010 | Permalink
Filed under: early childhood inclusion, quality

How do we know if we are providing high quality inclusion for young children with disabilities? Join Sharon and Elena in discussing two new tools for measuring the quality of inclusion or preschool classes and programs. This is an early release of material to be discussed at the Inclusion Institute in May.

Add Comment

Table with 2 columns: Dr. Sharon Irwin - The SpecialLink Early Childhood Inclusion Quality Scale; Dr. Elena Soukakou - The Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)

Your comments and questions are invited.

- Related content
Including Children With Disabilities In State Pre-K Programs
Inclusive Classroom Profile
SpecialLink Early Childhood Inclusion Quality Scale

Add Comment

Send this Print this

http://community.fpg.unc.edu/discussions/blog-speaking-of-inclusion/measuring-the-quality-of-inclusion

Quality Initiatives  
Professional Development  
Inclusion

Presented by Pam Winton





---

# Rising Stars with Parallel or Intertwined Destinies?



# Purpose: To Share

---

- Traditional recommendations for linking quality, professional development, and inclusion
- A disruptive innovation



# PD Challenges



## Issues Related to PD

- Fragmentation across sectors
- Emphasis on access versus quality of job
- Lack of rigorous research on effective PD
- Lack of agreed upon definition
- Lack of practice focus to PD content

# NPDCI Definition of Professional Development



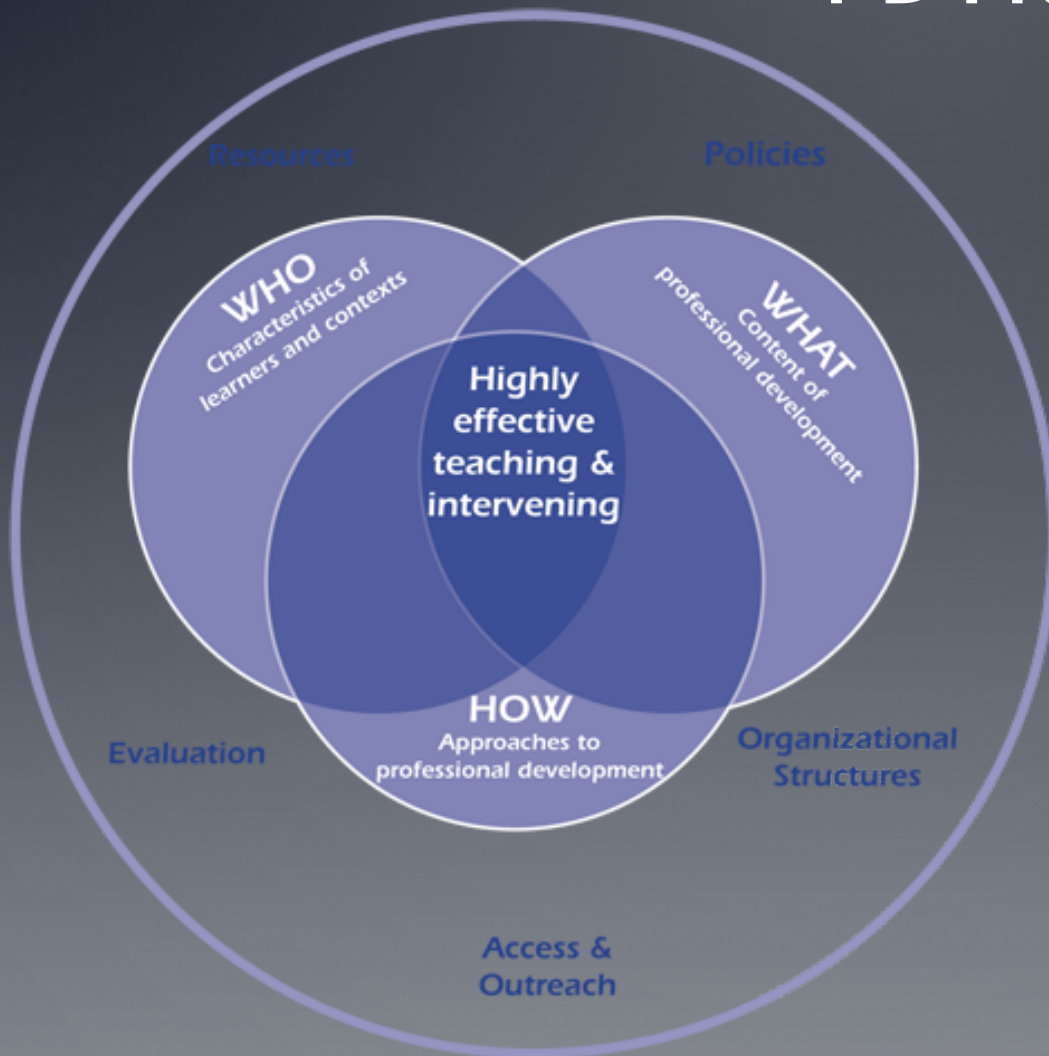
“Professional development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are **transactional** and designed to support the **acquisition** of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the **application** of this knowledge in practice ...”

## Definition (continued)

*The key components of professional development include:*

- a) characteristics and contexts of the learners (i.e., **the "who"** );*
- b) content (i.e., **the "what"** of professional development); and*
- c) organization and facilitation of learning experiences (i.e., **the "how"**)."*

# National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) PD Framework



# Quality initiatives have potential to:

---

- Motivate learners (**the WHO**) to participate in PD
  - Shape the focus of PD content (**the WHAT**)
  - Undergird the quality of the PD experiences available to learners (**the HOW**)
-

# Example: Two Components of QRIS Focused on PD

---

- TA available to promote program quality ....what is the content & quality of TA & TA providers, etc?
  - Education/training requirements ...but what is the content & quality of IHE preparation, training, etc?
-



# Traditional recommendations requiring slow incremental changes to existing structures

## National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

Helping states achieve an integrated professional development system that supports high quality inclusion

## National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

Helping states achieve an integrated professional development system that supports high quality inclusion



## Why Program Quality Matters for Early Childhood Inclusion

Recommendations for Professional Development

### CONTENTS

Components of Global Program Quality and the Quality Improvement Movement ... 2

Considerations for Additional Dimensions of Quality Inclusion ... 4

Recommendations for Infusing Content on Inclusive Program Quality in Professional Development ... 5

Appendix A: Resources ... 8

Appendix B: Key Features of States' QRIS ... 11

Appendix C: Resources of Program Quality ... 10

The quality of the early childhood workforce<sup>1</sup> is a critical factor and may be of overriding importance in determining whether early education and intervention is of high or poor quality. Along with a safe and well-equipped early learning environment, it is the characteristics and behaviors of the practitioners themselves that likely contribute most to the quality of the program and its effectiveness for young children and their families.

Professional development to help practitioners acquire knowledge or improve teaching and intervention practices should reflect this vital connection between the quality of the program and the quality of the early childhood workforce. In an earlier publication, we defined professional development and described a framework for planning and organizing professional development (see Auh and NMDI, 2008, under *Definition of Professional Development* in the Resources section). This document advocates for the need to link early childhood program quality and professional development, with a particular focus on how this topic relates to early childhood inclusion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The early childhood workforce represents the group of individuals who are employed in the field of early childhood education and care.

## Building Integrated Professional Development Systems in Early Childhood: Recommendations for States

Support an integrated, cross-sector professional

States should reach consensus on a single definition of professional development that emphasizes both the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions and the application of this knowledge in practice.

## Recommendations to states for integrating quality, PD and inclusion:

- Create structures for developing cross-sector integrated quality and PD systems based upon an agreed upon definition of PD
  - Identify evidence-based practices that promote the development and learning of every child within a quality inclusive environment and make these the centerpiece of the PD system
  - Ensure the quality of PD provided and that PD providers are supported in implementing effective PD methods to teach about quality improvements and evidence-based practices.
-

# Disruptive Innovation



# An EBP Approach to PD

Focus on young children in inclusive environments

- Help build early childhood practitioners' abilities to make evidence-based decisions

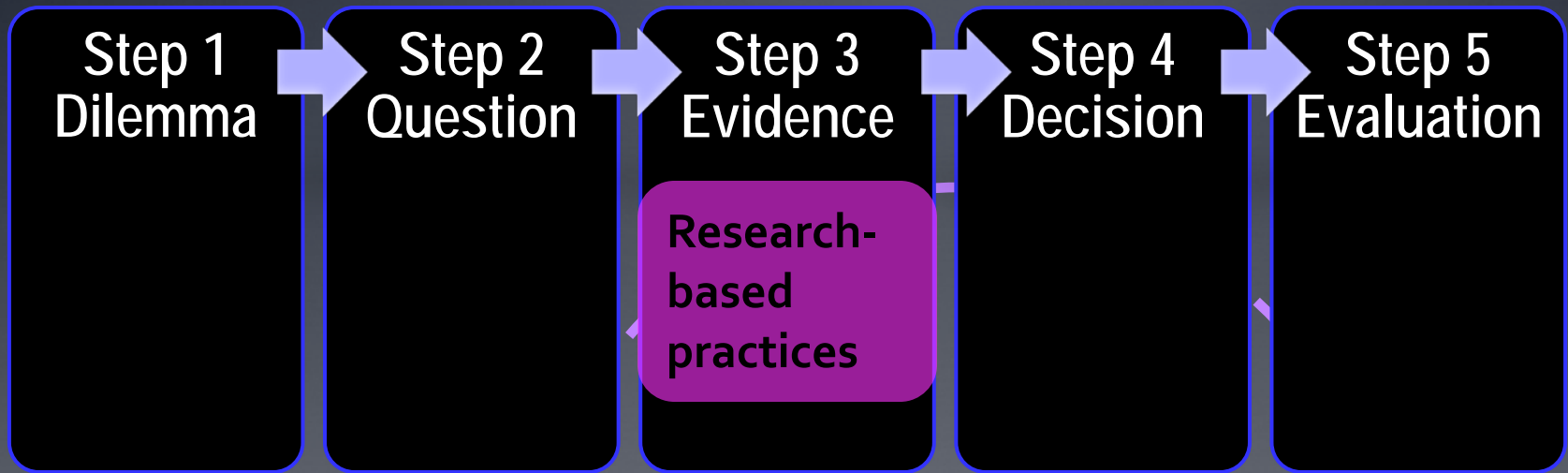
For faculty and PD providers

## CONNECT Modules



Online Instructional Resources

# Emphasis on Customizing Teaching



**5 Step Learning Cycle - Process for Making Evidence-Based Practice Decisions**

**Modularity**

**Family-Professional Partnership**

**Diversity**

**Assistive Technology**

**Assessment**

**Socioemotional development**

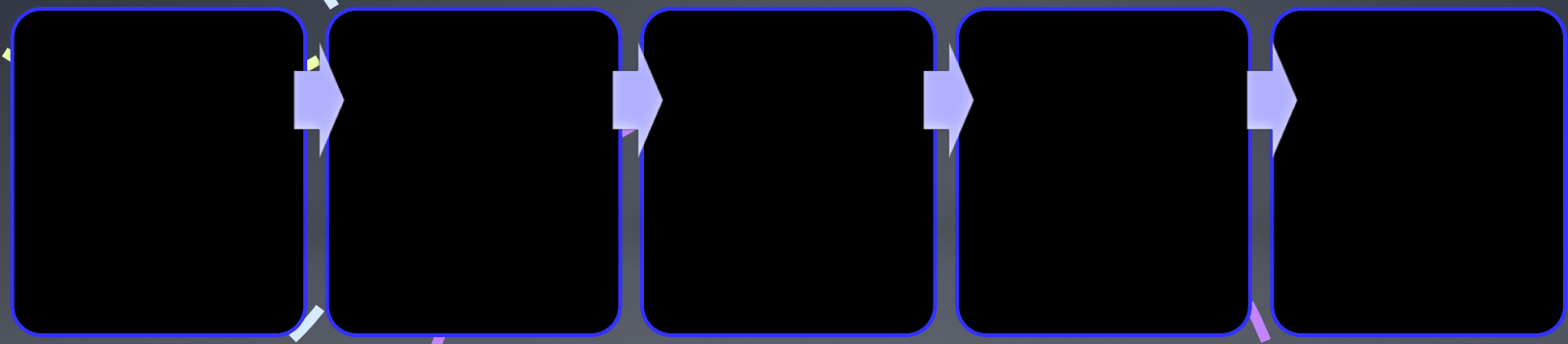
**Transition**

**Family support**

**Challenging behaviors**

**Teacher-child interaction**

**Collaboration**



# Variety of PD Contexts

Caring for  
Children with  
Challenging  
Behaviors

- Coursework
- Practice
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Consultation
- Supervision



# Use of Social Media: Available 24/7,online discussion, YOUTUBE

## Comment on additional guideline

---

Posted by Johnna Darragh at Feb 05, 2009

Thanks for the opportunity to review--I found the guidelines very comprehensive and well-developed. The only add on suggestion that I had pertained to demonstrating diversity in professional roles...there is a broad range of target audiences listed, and an overt inclusion of this as a guideline could ensure that the modules "speak to" the broad array of professionals who could benefit from the materials.

 Reply  Remove

## Comment on additional guideline

---

Posted by Pam Winton at Feb 06, 2009

So true Johnna...we are striving to incorporate ways to engage a variety of learners at different levels (and we hope you all can help with this) and guidelines need to make that explicit. Thanks



 Reply  Remove

## Feedback

---

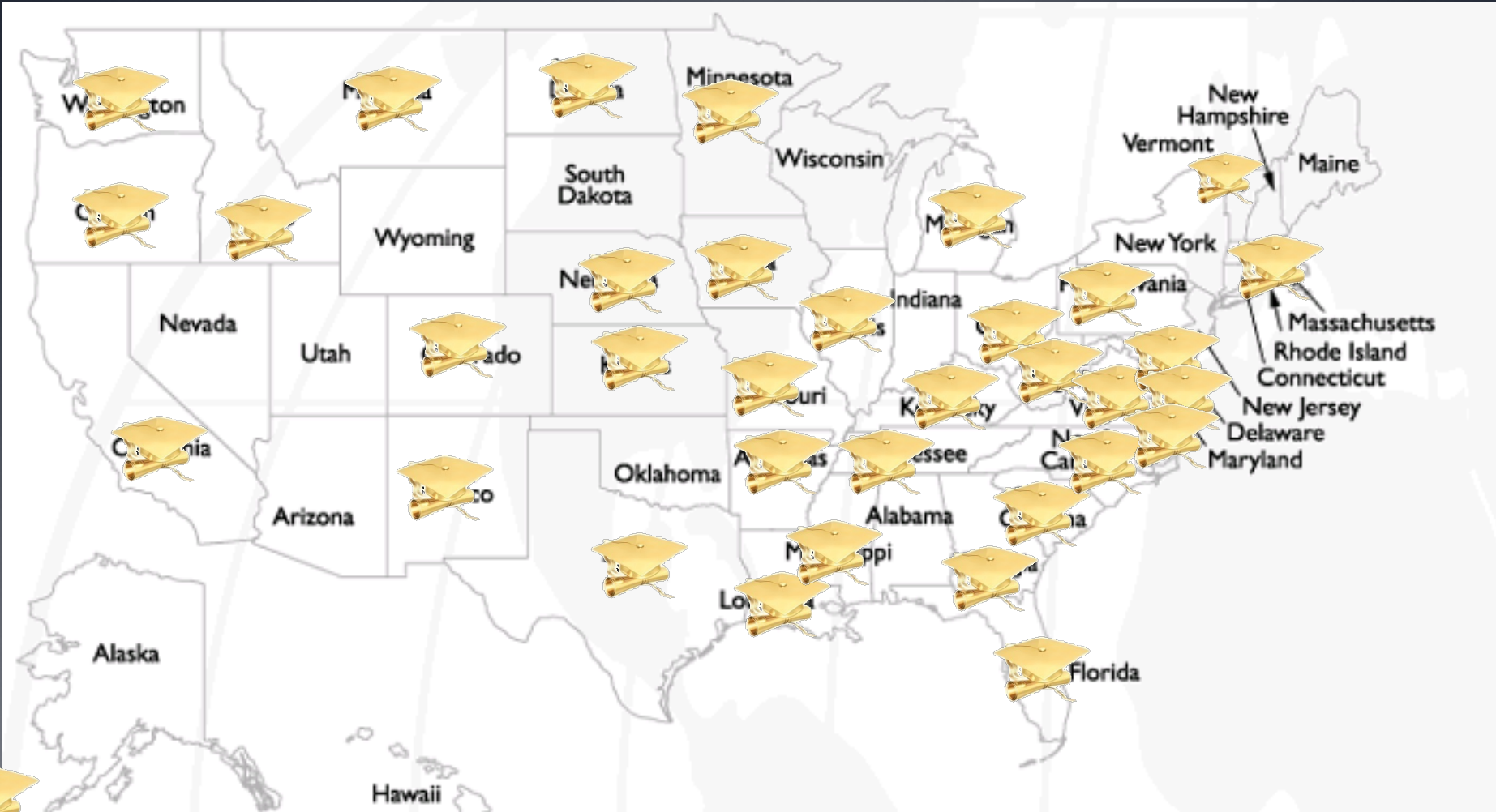
Posted by Christine Myers at Feb 06, 2009

I think this is very comprehensive, I just had a couple comments. First, under E-learning/Accessibility, you might add "at a vareity of font sizes" to "Materials and module components are readable on the screen". I have had this be an issue when I teach online. Also, I see learner reflection mentioned in Family-Centered practices and collaboration, but not under Instructional Design. Perhaps you could be a little more specific and add something about "Opportunities for learners to relect on application of the practice" instead of just addressing feedback. This may help to close the loop for practitioners. Christine

 Reply  Remove



# Planning for Adoption: Pilot Participants



Visit our community website  
<http://community.fpg.unc.edu>

## CONNECT

Pam Winton, Virginia Buysse,  
Maggie Connolly, Chih Ing Lim,  
Jonathan Green, Christine  
Lindauer, Heidi Hollingsworth



Ann Turnbull



KU THE UNIVERSITY OF  
KANSAS

Beth Rous & Patti  
Singleton

UNIVERSITY OF  
KENTUCKY®

## NPDCI

Pam Winton, Virginia  
Buysse, Camille Catlett,  
Shelley deFosset, Tracey  
West, Jonathan Green  
Heidi Hollingsworth



Turning around program  
quality through  
innovation ...

# Customized early education & intervention

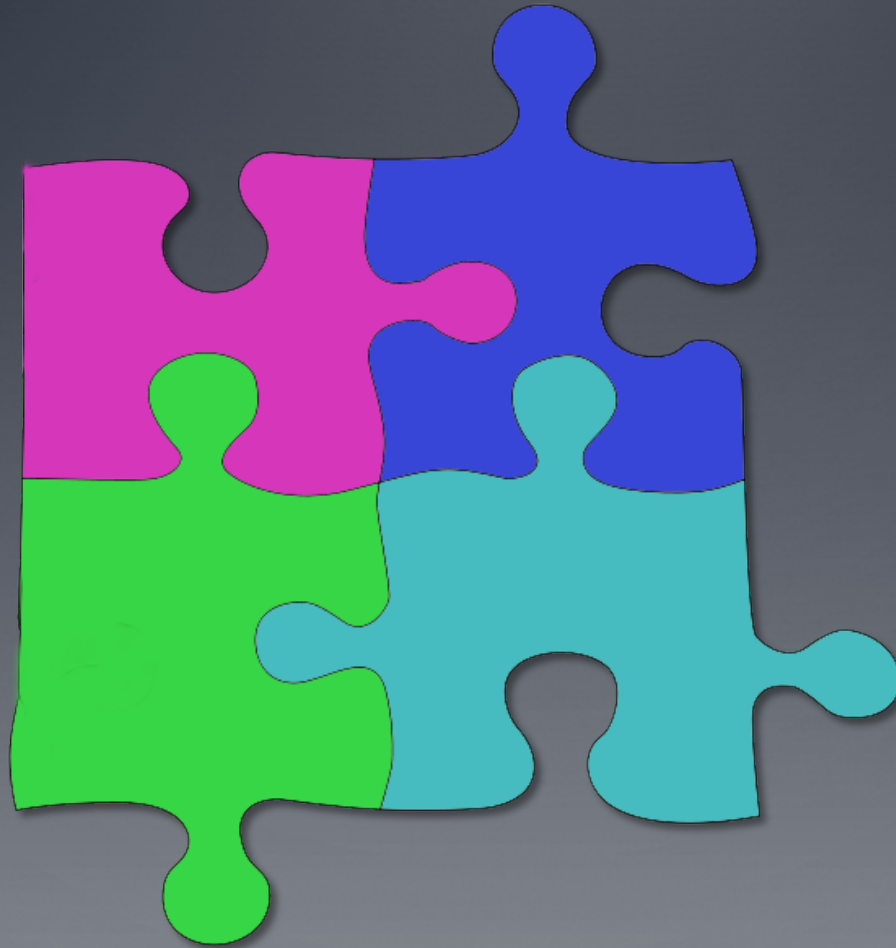


# New technologies & skills to manage innovations in intentional teaching



A modular, cross-sector system of standards,  
accountability, resources, and supports

---

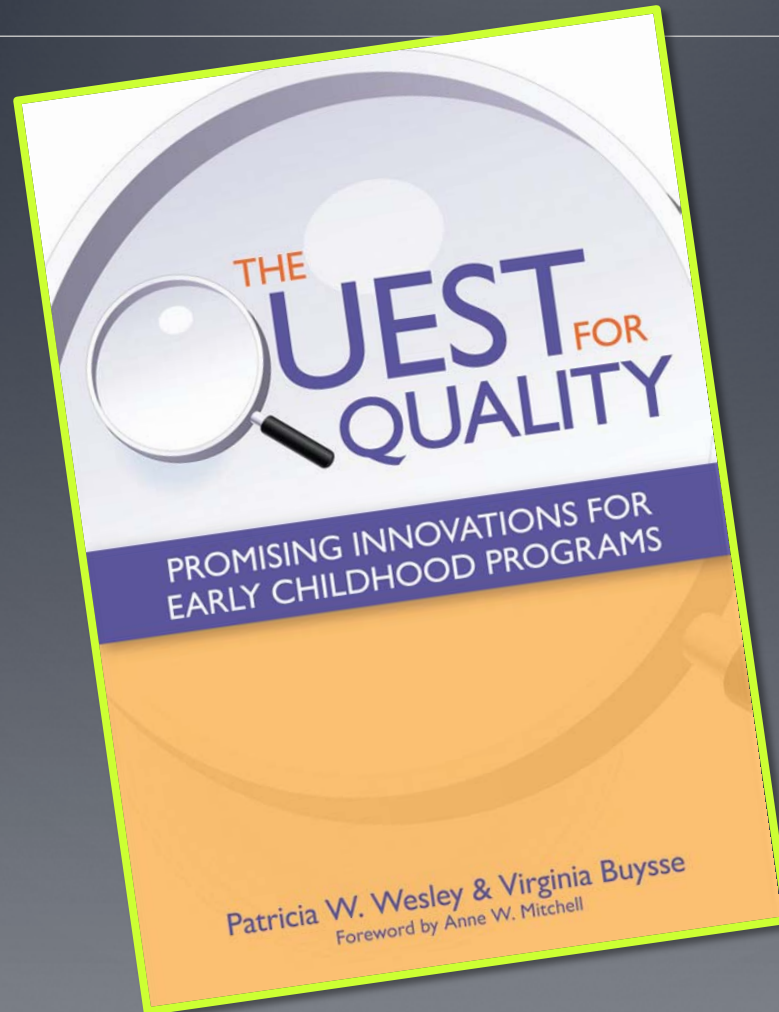


# Where is the most fertile ground for future innovations?

- In places where practitioners work and children learn .



# Hot Off the Press





# Quality Rating & Improvement System

Resource Guide

[Home](#)[About QRIS](#)[QRIS Resource Guide](#)[State Information](#)[Resource](#)[Initial Design Process](#)[Approaches to Implementation](#)[Standards and Criteria](#)[Accountability and Monitoring](#)[Provider Incentives and Support](#)[Data Collection and Evaluation](#)[Cost Projection and Financing](#)

## Initial Design Process

Planning a QRIS requires many considerations, and the process must be handled thoughtfully and with great deliberation because it lays the groundwork for everything that follows. If done well, the process can unify a wide range of constituencies and lead to greater understanding and support for early childhood care and education. This section includes information on setting the vision and goals, beginning the design process, determining which programs will participate, and gathering information on the current workforce and the licensing program.



### Establishing the QRIS Vision and Goals



# Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations

April 2010

# Quality Indicators of Inclusive Early Childhood Programs/Practices

A Compilation of Selected Resources

- 
- Cate, D., Diefendorf, M., & Whaley, K. (Eds.). (2010). Quality Indicators of Inclusive Early Childhood Programs/Practices: A Compilation of Selected Resources. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center.
-