



Annotated Bibliography: Program Quality Improvement Systems

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Most state preschool programs are required to monitor program quality, although standards may vary state by state. According to The National Institute for Early Education Research, *State of Preschool 2014*, of the 53 programs in the study, 32 meet the quality benchmark of conducting a monitoring visit every five years.¹ However, states are seeking to ensure that all children have access to a high quality program and teachers and administrators are supported in ongoing quality improvement efforts.

This document includes selected resources to assist states in assessing their current continuous quality improvement process for preschool programs as they expand services to increase access to high quality programs. Click on the topic in the table of contents and go directly to that section of the selected resources.

State Data on Preschool Quality Improvement Systems
Observational Measures of Instructional Practice
Monitoring Procedures
Data Driven Quality Improvement
Governance of Preschool Program Quality Assurance System

State Data on Preschool Quality Improvement Systems

[State of the State Policy Snapshot Number 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Policies](#)

Schilder, D. & Carolan, M. (2013). *State of the state policy snapshot number 1: Monitoring and evaluation policies*. New Brunswick NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes.

This report provides a review of the states' prekindergarten monitoring and evaluation procedures based on data reported in the "*The state of preschool 2012: State preschool yearbook*." The authors report that "47 percent of children were enrolled in programs that did not meet the benchmark for site visits (pg. 3)." The authors report specific information about how program data are collected and used. For instance "data collected were most commonly used to improve program and teaching quality, by guiding professional development and technical assistance. About two-thirds of all programs reported that monitoring data are used to take corrective actions or sanctions, and about half report that data is used to make funding decisions about programs or grantees, or to implement changes in state policy regarding the preschool program (pg. 7)."

¹ See http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/yearbook2014_executivesummary_1.pdf



Observational Measures of Instructional Practice

[Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education Settings: A Compendium of Measures, Second Edition](#)

Halle, T., Vick Whittaker, J. E., & Anderson, R. (2010). *Quality in early childhood care and education settings: A compendium of measures, Second edition*. Washington, DC: Child Trends. Prepared by Child Trends for the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This paper provides a consistent framework with which to review the existing measures of the quality of early care and education settings. The aim is to provide uniform information about quality measures that can be useful to researchers and practitioners, and help to inform the measurement of quality for policy-related purposes.

Monitoring Procedures

[Innovation in Monitoring in Early Care and Education: Options for States](#)

Trivedi, P. A. (2015). *Innovation in monitoring in early care and education: Options for states*. Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“This paper examines monitoring across ECE settings and considers lessons learned from the analogous sectors of child welfare and health. Although professional organizations in partnership with federal agencies developed national guidelines for health and safety, there is wide variation in state and local regulations around the minimum health and safety requirements for children in care. Areas of regulatory variation include: 1) thresholds for the number of children in licensed care at ECE facilities located in family child care homes (FCCs); 2) the comprehensiveness of background checks for ECE provider staff and individuals residing at FCCs; and 3) the frequency of monitoring visits... this paper outlines the challenges and possibilities of building accountability systems that support positive child and family outcomes while reducing the burden on individual providers within multiple funding streams (pg. 6).”

Data Driven Quality Improvement

[Continuous Quality Improvement in Afterschool Settings: Impact Findings from the Youth Program Quality Intervention Study](#)

Smith, C., Akiva, T., Sugar, S. A., Lo, Y. J., Frank, K. A., Peck, S. C., Cortina, K. S. & Devaney, T. (2012). *Continuous quality improvement in afterschool settings: Impact findings from the Youth Program Quality Intervention study*. Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment.

This review finds that “effective continuous improvement practices include:

- (1) site managers who are focused on improving quality in point of service settings;
- (2) high and clear expectations by and for staff about instructional practices;



- (3) technologies of assessment and feedback on performance;
- (4) in-service training to build professional knowledge and skills; and
- (5) opportunities for staff participation in decision making through site-based teams (pg. 6)."

The study authors suggest “the common design elements across all of these policy models, higher and lower stakes alike, are standardized observational assessment of instructional environments and the use of these data for improvement of services to children and youth (pg 8).

[A Blueprint for Early Care and Education Quality Improvement Initiatives](#)

Tout, K. Epstein, D., Soli, M. & Lowe, C. (2015). *A blueprint for early care and education quality improvement initiatives*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

According to its authors, “the purpose of this report is to address questions about effective QI initiatives by proposing a blueprint of quality improvement practices and design considerations generated from a synthesis of the existing research literature and input from national experts in ECE quality improvement (pg. 1).” This report can be used to frame a review of existing quality improvement initiatives.

[Continuous Quality Improvement: An Overview Report for State QRIS Leaders](#)

Wiggins, K. & Mathias, D. (2013). *Continuous quality improvement: An overview report for state QRIS leaders*. BUILD Initiative.

The BUILD initiative developed a policy brief and hosted a Learning table with state QRIS leaders to promote a culture of continuous quality improvement. According to the authors, a CQI environment is one in which data is collected and used to makes positive changes – even when things are going well – rather than waiting for something to go wrong and then fixing it.”

Governance of Preschool Program Quality Assurance System

[Evaluating the “Crazy Quilt”: Educational Governance in California](#)

Brewer, D.J., & Smith, J. (2007). *Evaluating the “crazy quilt”: Educational governance in California*. Institute for Research on Education Policy & Practice.

In this paper, the authors present a framework for critically examining education accountability structures in K-12 that includes the following five dimensions: (1) Stability, (2) Accountability; (3) Transparency; (4) Innovation and flexibility; and (5) Efficiency. They argue that “while there may be conceptual advantages for one set of arrangements over another, there is little empirical evidence that one is preferred in the sense that it leads directly to better outcomes or indirectly to more effective educational policy” (pp. 18). This framework can be used to provide insights into the state’s apparatus for monitoring its quality assurance approach.



[Continuous Improvement in Education](#)

Park, S., Hironaka, S., Carver, P, & Nordstrum, L. (2013). *Continuous Improvement in Education*. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

This white paper attempts to map the landscape of continuous improvement in education by identifying and describing organizations engaged in continuous improvement, and by highlighting commonalities and differences among them. The findings classify three types of organizations engaged in continuous improvement: those focused on instructional improvement at the classroom level; those concentrating on system-wide improvement; and those addressing collective impact. Each type is described in turn and illustrated by an organizational case study. Through the analysis, six common themes that characterize all three types of organizations (e.g., leadership and strategy, communication and engagement, organizational infrastructure, methodology, data collection and analysis, and building capacity) are enumerated. This white paper makes four concluding observations.



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