



## Quality Rating Systems— Major Findings from Four States

A total of 24 focus groups/interviews, including 128 center- and home-based directors, teachers, and parents, were conducted as part of the Midwest Child Care Research Consortium (IA, KS, MO, NE). Below (in bold) are the 21 themes that emerged from the data, with typical comments following.

### Positive Findings Relating to QRS

**Staff:**           **provides recognition/respect/validation for staff**  
**provides learning opportunities for staff, including being observed**

[The teachers] are more confident than previously. . . They don't wait for me to tell them everything to do. They have their own ideas, they can plan a lesson.

*Rural Center Director*

**Programs:**   **provides quality standards**  
**improves quality**  
**allows program to attract and retain high quality staff**

I think it would just give a universal way to . . . determine your quality, but then also a way to improve it.

*Urban Home-Based Provider*

[If] I was wanting to . . . go to a different job, I would want to go to a program that has quality care, because that's going to be . . . the most service to the community.

*Urban Center Teacher*

**Families:**   **provides guide for parents/educates them**  
**gives parents sense of pride and comfort**

[If] they come out with a quality rating that says that my [child's] daycare was a one, I'd move them. It would matter.

*Urban Parent*

**Community:** **allows programs to gain credibility and validation in community**

I think that this rating will. . . be an instrument to use to show that, yes, we do have quality staff here and that we're doing a good job with children in the community.

*Rural Center Director*

### Negative Findings Relating to QRS

**Staff:**           **may cause stress among staff**

I think it's intimidating, because they're wanting to know, what are they looking for? What are they going to find out? Are they going to make some comment about this?

*Urban Center Director*

*Prepared by Drs. Mumford and Thornburg at the Center for Family Policy & Research.  
For more information, contact Dr. Mumford at 573 884-6116. (May 2006)*

**Programs:** observations are too objective; children act up; observer might be biased  
process is time consuming/too much paperwork  
might get stuck with bad rating

The provider who really is a good provider but somebody on the outside looking in says that's not the way the book says to do it. It's going to mess up their star ratings because they don't go by somebody's rules.

*Rural Home-Based Provider*

[I]f you got this certain rating, how long would you have that before you had the opportunity to change it?

*Rural Center Director*

### Needs Relating to QRS

**Programs:** need time for improvement  
need mentors, peer support, training and technical assistance

You get your feedback, and then you know this is what I need to do, this is how I can build the program more. What can I do as a better teacher? This is what shows up. And I'm thinking that...the feedback is going to be very important.

*Urban Center Teacher*

### Challenges Relating to QRS

**Staff:** lack of motivation and incentive to improve  
unwilling to put forth the effort to improve

I also feel like the teachers. . .want to do better, but maybe they feel like, well, you know what, I'm not getting paid enough to do what I really should be doing.

*Urban Center Director*

**Programs:** quality is expensive  
training—availability, expenses, time  
issues of hiring, training, and motivating quality staff

[A] budget is so much for our salaries, and so much for facilities, and so much for classroom supplies. And so, if . . .in order to attain the quality rating we would have to go over our budget, we might have problems with finances.

*Urban Center Director*

I think to increase the quality of the program, you would have to give [the staff] a little more support and more security in their jobs so that they wouldn't. . .burn out, wouldn't have to look for something else. . .so they could survive.

*Rural Center Director*

**Families:** don't understand what high quality means  
inability to afford high quality programs

I was looking for how friendly the people are, just as I walk in. How it looks when I walk in, if there's people that are there that you can talk to right when you walk in the door.

*Rural Parent*