

States that received Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grants made progress in developing tiered quality rating and improvement systems

The Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program, sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, encouraged states to develop and implement systems that rate early childhood education programs on quality and help them improve. These systems are known as tiered quality rating and improvement systems (TQRIS).

TQRIS aim to improve children's access to high quality early childhood education.



Establish quality standards



Encourage programs to participate



Rate programs



Provide incentives for programs to improve and earn higher ratings



Publicize programs' ratings to help parents select better programs for their children

The nine states that received the first of three rounds of RTT-ELC grants differed substantially in the ways that they structured and implemented, promoted participation in, and rated and monitored programs in their TQRIS.

Eight of the nine states had a statewide TQRIS in place by 2015.



States used different methods to calculate ratings, some of which changed over time.



States promoted participation in TQRIS in several ways.



- States made participation mandatory for certain programs, such as public prekindergarten or Head Start programs.



- States provided alternative pathways into higher rating levels.



- States offered financial incentives tied to higher ratings.

States used various sources of evidence to collect the information needed to rate programs.

- Document reviews conducted by trained staff
- On-site classroom observations conducted by trained staff



Based on interviews conducted with administrators of TQRIS in nine states in 2015.

Read the full evaluation report by Mathematica at: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/progress-and-challenges-in-developing-tiered-quality-rating-and-improvement-systems>