

# Office of Early Childhood Quality Initiatives

## Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant

Colorado was awarded \$45 million dollars in grant funding through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. The Grant will provide funding through 2016, which will accelerate the State's plan to improve school readiness for all children.

All children, but especially children with high needs, need a solid start with caring adults who provide learning and development opportunities in every setting - homes, child care centers, and schools

Research on Importance of Quality in Early Childhood

State's Priorities around Early Childhood

Components of the RTT - ELC Grant

### People

- Strong workforce
- Understand children
- Background and education to fully use tools to support each child

### Processes

- Manage smarter and more effectively
- Collaborate across agency, across department, with community and families

### Tools

- Quality Rating Information System (QRIS)
- Universal Application
- Professional Development Information System (PDIS)
- Early Childhood Competencies Framework
- Child Assessments: Kindergarten Readiness/Results Matter Expansion
- Early learning and Development Guidelines
- Standardized Developmental Screening

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS AND IMPORTANCE

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) builds a strong foundation for Colorado's future success, ensures all children are safe, healthy and thriving.
- High quality programs have impact to include reduced dropout and repetition rates, improved social achievements, greater adult productivity, and higher levels of social and emotional functioning.
- Stimulus effect on the economy, tax savings and return on investment
- Research shows that the first 2,000 days of a child's life have a lasting impact on later learning, health and success. Children's earliest experiences determine how their brains are wired, lay the groundwork for future health, and form the foundation of the social and emotional skills needed for academic and workplace success.

## FIVE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER ABOUT EARLY CHILDHOOD

**700** new neural connections per second

**18** months: Age at which disparities in vocabulary begin to appear

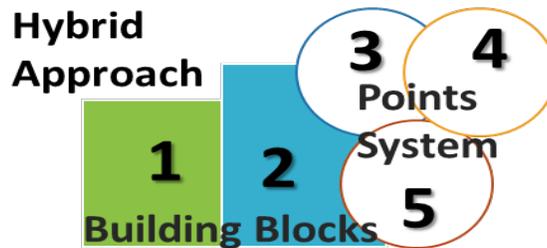
**3:1** odds of adult heart disease after 7-8 adverse childhood experiences

**\$4-\$9** in returns for every dollar invested in early childhood programs



## COLORADO'S NEXT GENERATION QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS)

A method to assess, enhance and communicate the level of quality in early education and care for all licensed providers in Colorado. This system provides standardized criteria for all early care and education providers in Colorado to be rated for quality, and provides incentives and supports to providers that wish to raise the level of quality care available at their facility.



The system is a blocks and points system. Levels 1 and 2 are "building blocks" tiers with movement to the next level based on completion of identified activities and standards. To reach Level 1, providers will need to be in compliance with licensing standards. To reach Level 2, providers will show they have established other aspects of care and education to promote positive experiences. To receive a Level 2 designation, all indicators within this level must be met. Designations for Levels 3, 4, and 5 will be determined by cumulative points plus a minimum number of points in each of the standard areas.

### Summer - Fall 2014 Timeline

- Ratings Design Guide (v4) Published
- Quality Improvement Incentives Framework Established
- QRIS Branding
- Data Systems Development
- Provider Guidance Documents
- Training Designs and Support
- Phase 1 Alternate Pathways
- Piloting, Roll-out and Training of Level 2 Modules

### Program Planning Activities

- Ensure all staff transcripts and training documents are up to date
- Become familiar with the Environment Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R) that relate to your program
- Make the most of each licensing visit – talk to Specialists about areas of strength and opportunity
- Prepare Teaching Teams and include them in the planning process
- Discuss and set Program Goals

### QRIS Phased Approach Summer 2014-Fall 2016

