

## Senate Counsel & Research

G-17 STATE CAPITOL  
75 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD.  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155-1606  
(651) 296-4791  
FAX (651) 296-7747  
JO ANNE ZOFF SELLNER  
DIRECTOR

# Senate

---

## State of Minnesota

### COUNSEL

PETER S. WATTSON  
JOHN C. FULLER  
BONNIE L. BEREZOVSKY  
DANIEL P. MCGOWAN  
KATHLEEN E. PONTIUS  
PATRICIA A. LIEN  
KATHERINE T. CAVANOR  
CHRISTOPHER B. STANG  
KENNETH P. BACKHUS  
CAROL E. BAKER  
JOAN E. WHITE  
THOMAS S. BOTTERN  
ANN MARIE BUTLER

### LEGISLATIVE ANALYSTS

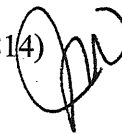
DAVID GIEL  
GREGORY C. KNOPFF  
MATTHEW GROSSER  
NIEL L. MUELLER  
JACK PAULSON  
CHRIS L. TURNER  
AMY M. VENNEWITZ  
MAJA WEIDMANN

## S.F. No. 592 - Early Learning Standards and a Quality Rating System

**Author:** Senator Bob Kierlin

**Prepared by:** Joan White, Senate Counsel (651/296-3814)

**Date:** January 18, 2005



---

**Section 1** establishes early learning standards.

**Subdivision 1** requires the Commissioners of Education and Human Services to disseminate information and provide training to parents and early care and education providers on the early learning standards developed for three- and four-year-old children that describe what children should know and be able to do to be prepared for kindergarten entrance.

**Subdivision 2** requires the Commissioner of Human Services to develop early learning standards and distribute the standards to parents and early care and education providers. The standards must include what children from birth to age three should know and be able to do to be prepared for kindergarten entrance. The commissioner shall provide information and training to parents and early care education providers on the standards.

**Subdivision 3** requires that early care and education programs or providers that receive state funding be provided with a copy of the early learning standards to guide their early care and education practices.

**Section 2** requires the Commissioner of Human Services, in partnership with the Ready 4 K Quality Rating System Task Force, to pilot by January 15, 2006, a voluntary

quality rating system for child care with the intent of raising the quality in child care settings. The rating system shall be aligned with the standards developed by the commissioners under section 1, the Head Start performance standards, and the Department of Education's standards for school readiness programs in public schools. This section requires the quality rating system to include:

- (1) quality learning environment indicators;
- (2) staff qualification indicators;
- (3) family involvement and parent education indicators; and
- (4) program evaluation.

The Commissioner of Human Services is also required to provide public on-line access to child care licensing data. The data shall include at a minimum any sanctions or other disciplinary actions against the provider, as well as any data or score associated with the voluntary quality rating system.

**Section 3** provides a blank appropriation to the Commissioner of Education for purposes of section 1.

JW:rdr

Senators Kierlin, Kubly, Robling, Scheid and Pappas introduced--  
S.F. No. 592: Referred to the Committee on Education.

1 A bill for an act

2 relating to early childhood education; providing for  
3 early learning standards and a quality rating system;  
4 appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in  
5 Minnesota Statutes, chapter 124D.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

7 Section 1. [124D.145] [EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS.]

8 Subdivision 1. [DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF  
9 HUMAN SERVICES.] The commissioners of education and human  
10 services shall disseminate information and provide training to  
11 parents and early care and education providers on the early  
12 learning standards developed for three- and four-year-old  
13 children that describe what children should know and be able to  
14 do to be prepared for kindergarten entrance.

15 Subd. 2. [DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.] The commissioner  
16 of human services shall develop early learning standards and  
17 distribute the standards to parents and early care and education  
18 providers. The standards must include what children from birth  
19 to age three should know and be able to do to be prepared for  
20 kindergarten entrance. The commissioner shall provide  
21 information and training to parents and early care education  
22 providers on the standards.

23 Subd. 3. [EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM PROVIDERS.] An  
24 early care and education program or provider that receives stat  
25 money must be provided with a copy of the early learning

1 standards for children ages birth to age five developed by the  
2 commissioners of education and human services to guide their  
3 early care and education practices.

4 Sec. 2. [VOLUNTARY QUALITY RATING SYSTEM FOR CHILD CARE.]

5 (a) The commissioner of human services, in partnership with the  
6 Ready 4 K Quality Rating System Task Force, shall pilot by  
7 January 15, 2006, a voluntary quality rating system for child  
8 care with the intent of raising the quality in child care  
9 settings. The rating system shall be aligned with the early  
10 learning standards developed by the commissioners of education  
11 and human services, shall be research-based, provide  
12 easy-to-understand information for parents, be objective and  
13 verifiable, and must be fair and representative of the care that  
14 child care programs provide. The quality rating system shall  
15 also be aligned with the Head Start performance standards and  
16 the Minnesota Department of Education's standards for school  
17 readiness programs in the public schools. At a minimum, the  
18 quality rating system shall include:

- 19 (1) quality learning environment indicators;  
20 (2) staff qualification indicators;  
21 (3) family involvement and parent education indicators; and  
22 (4) program evaluation.

23 (b) The Department of Human Services shall provide to the  
24 public on-line access to child care licensing data. The data  
25 shall include at a minimum any sanctions or other disciplinary  
26 actions against the provider, as well as any data or score  
27 associated with the voluntary quality rating system.

28 Sec. 3. [APPROPRIATION.]

29 \$..... is appropriated in fiscal year 2006 and \$.....  
30 is appropriated in fiscal year 2007 from the general fund to the  
31 commissioner of education for the purposes of early learning  
32 standards and assessment.

1 Senator ..... moves to amend S.F. No. 592 as follows:

2 Page 2, line 5, delete "(a)"

3 Page 2, line 6, delete "pilot" and insert "develop a plan"

4 Page 2, line 7, before "a" insert "for"

5 Page 2, line 9, after the period, insert "The plan shall

6 outline the process for choosing an early care and education

7 nonprofit organization to administer the quality rating system."

8 Page 2, delete lines 23 to 27

9 Page 2, line 31, delete everything after "for" and insert

10 "implementation of section 1."

11 Page 2, delete line 32 and insert "\$...... is appropriated

12 in fiscal year 2006 and \$...... is appropriated in fiscal year

13 2007 from the general fund to the commissioner of human services

14 for implementation of section 1."

## Senate Counsel & Research

G-17 STATE CAPITOL  
75 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD.  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155-1606  
(651) 296-4791  
FAX (651) 296-7747  
JO ANNE ZOFF SELLNER  
DIRECTOR

# Senate

---

## State of Minnesota

### COUNSEL

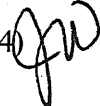
PETER S. WATTSON  
JOHN C. FULLER  
BONNIE L. BEREZOVSKY  
DANIEL P. MCGOWAN  
KATHLEEN E. PONTIUS  
PATRICIA A. LIEN  
KATHERINE T. CAVANOR  
CHRISTOPHER B. STANG  
KENNETH P. BACKHUS  
CAROL E. BAKER  
JOAN E. WHITE  
THOMAS S. BOTTERN  
ANN MARIE BUTLER

### LEGISLATIVE ANALYSTS

DAVID GIEL  
GREGORY C. KNOPFF  
MATTHEW GROSSER  
DANIEL L. MUELLER  
DICK PAULSON  
CHRIS L. TURNER  
AMY M. VENNEWITZ  
MAJA WEIDMANN

## S.F. No. 906 - Early Childhood Screening

**Author:** Senator Steve Kelley

**Prepared by:** Joan White, Senate Counsel (651/296-3814) 

**Date:** February 14, 2005

---

**Section 1** expands early childhood developmental screening by requiring the screening for children at least once by the child's third birthday, instead of once before school entrance. Districts are encouraged to reduce costs of screening by utilizing public or private health care organizations or individual health care providers in implementing the program.

**Section 2** amends the developmental screening program to require referrals to appropriate resources when potential problems are identified. This section also adds a new paragraph (f) requiring the district to develop and implement community outreach plans to diverse populations to ensure that children are screened by age three. Districts are encouraged to include parents, community partners, and others in the development of the outreach plans.

**Section 3** establishes the school readiness kindergarten assessment initiative.

**Subdivision 1** requires the Commissioner of Education to establish a system for assessing the school readiness of children entering kindergarten, building on the two readiness studies conducted by the department in 2002 and 2003. The commissioner shall set biennial milestones for progress in the number of children reaching proficiency on all measures of the assessment.

**Subdivision 2** implements the school readiness kindergarten assessment initiative in all school districts on a voluntary basis over a five-year period.

Results of the assessment must be included in the annual school performance report cards.

**Subdivision 3** requires the commissioner to evaluate the effectiveness of the data gathering system for implementing developmental assessments at kindergarten entrance on a school-by-school basis. The commissioner shall also report to the Senate and House of Representatives on the progress toward reaching the milestones in odd years beginning in 2007.

**Section 4** appropriates money for purposes of sections 1 to 3.

JW:rd

Senators Kelley, Wergin, Sparks, Nienow and Pappas introduced--

S.F. No. 906: Referred to the Committee on Finance.

1 A bill for an act  
2 relating to early childhood education; expanding early  
3 childhood developmental screening; establishing a  
4 school readiness kindergarten assessment initiative;  
5 appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2004,  
6 section 121A.17, subdivisions 1, 3.  
7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:  
8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 121A.17,  
9 subdivision 1, is amended to read:  
10 Subdivision 1. [EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING.]  
11 Every school board must provide for a mandatory program of early  
12 childhood developmental screening for children at least once  
13 ~~before-school-entrance, targeting children who are between 3-1/2~~  
14 ~~and-four-years-old~~ by the child's third birthday. This  
15 screening program must be established either by one board, by  
16 two or more boards acting in cooperation, by service  
17 cooperatives, by early childhood family education programs, or  
18 by other existing programs. This screening examination is a  
19 mandatory requirement for a student to continue attending  
20 kindergarten or first grade in a public school. A child need  
21 not submit to developmental screening provided by a board if the  
22 child's health records indicate to the board that the child has  
23 received comparable developmental screening from a public or  
24 private health care organization or individual health care  
25 provider. Districts are encouraged to reduce the costs of  
26 preschool developmental screening programs by utilizing



1 volunteers and public or private health care organizations or  
2 individual health care providers in implementing the program.

3 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 121A.17,  
4 subdivision 3, is amended to read:

5 Subd. 3. [SCREENING PROGRAM.] (a) A screening program must  
6 include at least the following components: developmental  
7 assessments, hearing and vision screening or referral,  
8 immunization review and referral, the child's height and weight,  
9 identification of risk factors that may influence learning, an  
10 interview with the parent about the child, and referral for  
11 assessment, diagnosis, and treatment or referrals to appropriate  
12 resources when potential needs are identified. The district and  
13 the person performing or supervising the screening must provide  
14 a parent or guardian with clear written notice that the parent  
15 or guardian may decline to answer questions or provide  
16 information about family circumstances that might affect  
17 development and identification of risk factors that may  
18 influence learning. The notice must clearly state that  
19 declining to answer questions or provide information does not  
20 prevent the child from being enrolled in kindergarten or first  
21 grade if all other screening components are met. If a parent or  
22 guardian is not able to read and comprehend the written notice,  
23 the district and the person performing or supervising the  
24 screening must convey the information in another manner. The  
25 notice must also inform the parent or guardian that a child need  
26 not submit to the district screening program if the child's  
27 health records indicate to the school that the child has  
28 received comparable developmental screening performed within the  
29 preceding 365 days by a public or private health care  
30 organization or individual health care provider. The notice  
31 must be given to a parent or guardian at the time the district  
32 initially provides information to the parent or guardian about  
33 screening and must be given again at the screening location.

34 (b) All screening components shall be consistent with the  
35 standards of the state commissioner of health for early  
36 developmental screening programs. A developmental screening

1 program must not provide laboratory tests or a physical  
2 examination to any child. The district must request from the  
3 public or private health care organization or the individual  
4 health care provider the results of any laboratory test or  
5 physical examination within the 12 months preceding a child's  
6 scheduled screening.

7 (c) If a child is without health coverage, the school  
8 district must refer the child to an appropriate health care  
9 provider.

10 (d) A board may offer additional components such as  
11 nutritional, physical and dental assessments, review of family  
12 circumstances that might affect development, blood pressure,  
13 laboratory tests, and health history.

14 (e) If a statement signed by the child's parent or guardian  
15 is submitted to the administrator or other person having general  
16 control and supervision of the school that the child has not  
17 been screened because of conscientiously held beliefs of the  
18 parent or guardian, the screening is not required.

19 (f) The district must develop and implement community  
20 outreach plans to diverse populations to ensure that all  
21 children are screened by age three. Districts are encouraged to  
22 include parents, community partners, public or private health  
23 care organizations, and individual health care providers in the  
24 development of the outreach plans.

25 Sec. 3. [SCHOOL READINESS KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT  
26 INITIATIVE.]

27 Subdivision 1. [ESTABLISHMENT.] The commissioner of  
28 education shall establish a system for assessing the school  
29 readiness of children entering kindergarten, building on the two  
30 school readiness studies conducted by the Department of  
31 Education in 2002 and 2003. The department shall also set  
32 biennial milestones for progress in the number of children  
33 reaching proficiency on all measures of the assessment.

34 Subd. 2. [DESCRIPTION.] (a) The school readiness  
35 kindergarten assessment initiative will be implemented in all  
36 school districts in Minnesota on a voluntary basis over a

1 five-year period. The schedule for implementation is as follows:

2 (1) fiscal year 2006, 6,000 entering kindergarteners;

3 (2) fiscal year 2007, 18,000 entering kindergarteners;

4 (3) fiscal year 2008, 30,000 entering kindergarteners;

5 (4) fiscal year 2009, 45,000 entering kindergarteners; and

6 (5) fiscal year 2010, 60,000 entering kindergarteners.

7 (b) Results of the assessment must be included in the  
8 annual school performance report cards under Minnesota Statutes,  
9 section 120B.36.

10 Subd. 3. [EVALUATION AND REPORTING.] The commissioner  
11 shall evaluate the effectiveness of the data gathering system  
12 for implementing developmental assessments at kindergarten  
13 entrance on a school-by-school basis. The commissioner shall  
14 also report to the committees of the senate and house of  
15 representatives having jurisdiction over early childhood  
16 education issues on the progress toward reaching the milestones  
17 in odd years beginning with fiscal year 2007.

18 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective June 30, 2005.

19 Sec. 4. [APPROPRIATION.]

20 Subdivision 1. [DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.] The sums  
21 indicated in this section are appropriated from the general fund  
22 to the Department of Education for the fiscal years designated.

23 Subd. 2. [HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING AID.] For  
24 health and developmental screening aid under Minnesota Statutes,  
25 sections 121A.17 and 121A.19:

26 \$..... 2006

27 \$..... 2007

28 The 2006 appropriation includes \$..... for 2005 and  
29 \$..... for 2006.

30 The 2007 appropriation includes \$..... for 2006 and  
31 \$..... for 2007.

32 Subd. 3. [SCHOOL READINESS KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT  
33 INITIATIVE.] For the school readiness kindergarten initiative:

34 \$..... 2006

35 \$..... 2007

1 Senator ..... moves to amend S.F. No. 906 as follows:

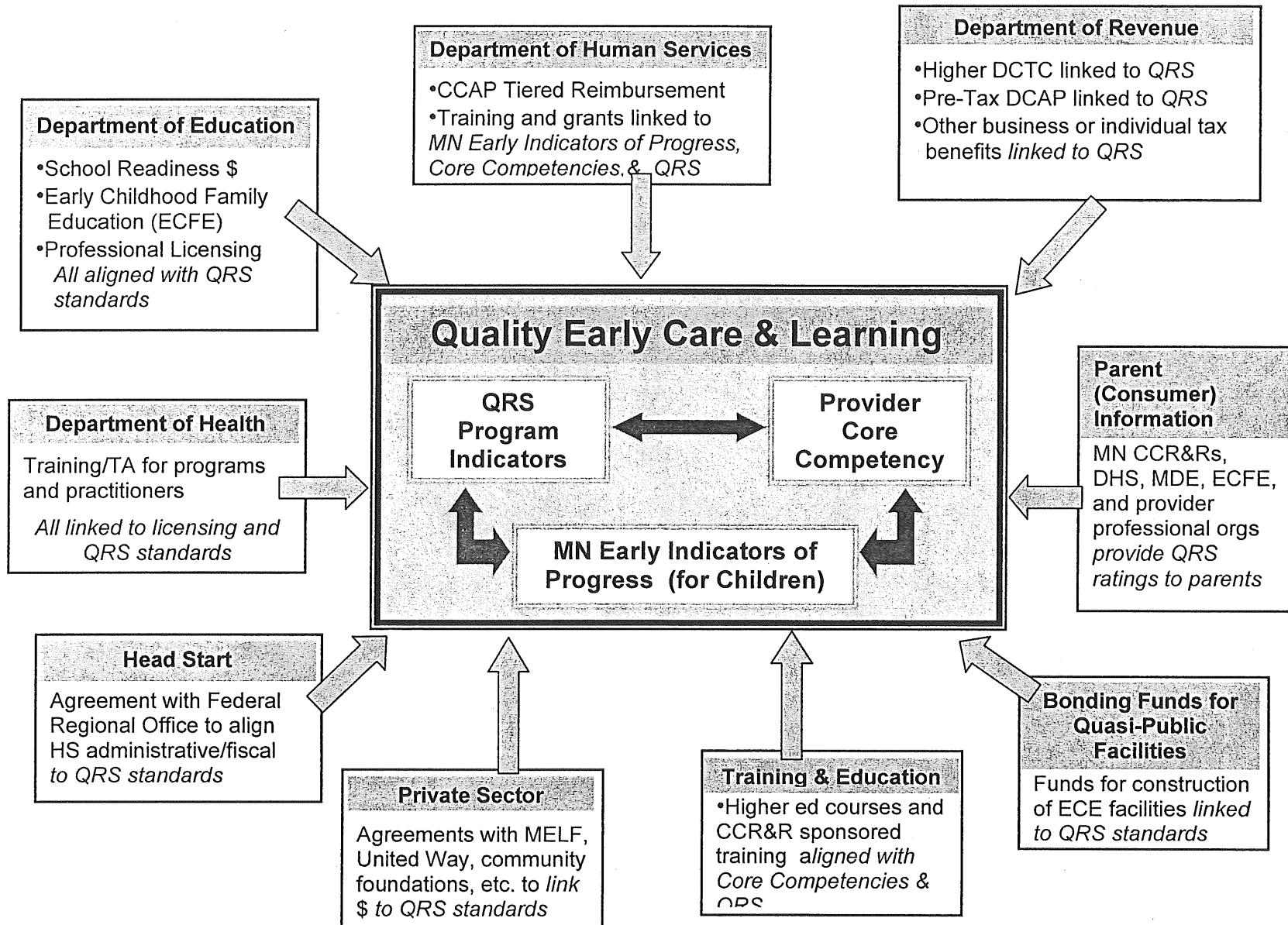
2 Page 1, line 14, delete "by" and insert "before school  
3 entrance, beginning on or after"

4 Page 3, line 20, delete "ensure that" and insert "promote"

5 Page 3, line 21, delete "are" and insert "being" and delete  
6 "by age three" and insert "at least once before school entrance,  
7 beginning on or after the child's third birthday"

8 Page 3, line 22, after the first comma, insert "early care  
9 and education programs,"

# Minnesota Vision for Quality Care and Education System



# Minnesota Quality Rating System for Early Care and Education and School-Age Care Programs

## *Questions & Answers*

The MN Quality Rating System will provide: 1) clear, concise consumer information on program quality for parents, 2) a pathway and incentives for providers to improve their quality, 3) recognition and rewards for quality providers, and 4) accountability for improving child outcomes for public and private investments in early care and education.

**Q: *Who was involved in designing the Minnesota Quality Rating System?***

**A:** The Ready for K Coalition ([www.ready4k.org](http://www.ready4k.org)), the Child Care Financing Project ([www.gmdca.org](http://www.gmdca.org)), and the Minnesota Department of Human Services convened a statewide Task Force to develop the QRS with representatives from family child care and centers, Head Start, schoolage care, Child Care Resource and Referral, professional organizations, teacher educators, licensing, health care, and early education research.

**Q: *How will the quality rating system impact child outcomes?***

**A:** Less than half of young children in Minnesota enter kindergarten with the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that will set them on a path for success. (MN Department of Education School Readiness Studies, 2002 and 2003) Minnesota also has the highest percentage in the country of mothers in the workforce. Numerous studies show that high quality early learning programs help close the early education achievement gap by helping children get ready for school and enter with the same set of skills as their peers. High quality after school programs have also been proven to help close the education achievement gap.

The key ingredient in this equation is *quality*. The MN Quality Rating System will recognize, market and reward programs as they incorporate best practices that research has demonstrated boost child outcomes.

**Q: *Who is calling for a MN Quality Rating System?***

**A:** The good news is that new supporters are calling for increased investment to ensure quality early education choices and parent consumer information. Business leaders involved in the MN School Readiness Business Advisory Council, policy makers and the Governor's office have endorsed rewarding effective programs that improve child outcomes. The Ready 4 K Coalition supports a quality rating system to better inform parents, to provide clear measures for results and to raise the resources needed to ensure that every child has access to quality care and education.

**Q: *Will it be mandatory for licensed programs to participate in the QRS?***

**A:** No. The MN QRS will be a voluntary program.

**Q: *Which types of programs will be eligible to participate?***

**A:** All licensed child care and education programs will be invited to participate, including: child care centers, family child care homes, preschool programs, and Head Starts. School District sponsored before-and-after school programs not required to be licensed will also be invited to participate.

**Q: *Isn't this just one more hoop to jump through? Why would child care programs want to participate?***

**A:** The MN QRS will be a way for programs to track their progress and be recognized for providing quality that exceeds licensing requirements. Many providers in Minnesota already go above and beyond licensing requirements but currently have no way to be recognized or rewarded. Other programs do not provide quality services because of lack of the financial resources needed to boost quality. The quality rating system will identify specific needs for financing quality improvements and for investing in quality programs through bonuses and targeted scholarships.

**Q: *Will there be assistance available to help my program achieve a higher rating?***

**A:** Yes. One of the advantages a quality rating system offers is the opportunity for zeroing in on provider needs, and demonstrating the impact for children of these investments. It is anticipated that new bonuses and incentives and existing grant programs, training and consultation will be modified and improved to help providers achieve quality rating goals.

**Q: *Will the rating system align with accreditation?***

**A:** Yes. Research confirms that accreditation by a nationally recognized body is a strong indicator of program quality. The MN QRS will utilize program accreditation.

**Q: *Will the system align with licensing?***

**A:** Yes. Licensing provides a floor for health and safety and a foundation for building quality. The first level of the MN QRS aligns with licensing.

**Q: *Will providers' non-credit coursework and training count toward the professional development qualifications in the rating?***

**A:** Yes.

**Q: *Is the QRS just for experienced providers?***

**A:** No. A participating provider's rating will be based on meeting the specific standards set out in the MN QRS.

**Q: *Will child assessments be used in the ratings?***

**A:** Child observation will be included in the rating indicators as an *internal program improvement tool*. Providers will achieve higher ratings if they incorporate ongoing child observation to identify children who need special attention or services and to make program adjustments and improvements. The evaluation of the QRS system may also use a random sampling of child assessments from participating QRS programs. However, individual child assessments **will not** be included in the rating as a measure of individual program quality.

**Q: *Will this mean a lot of extra documentation and paperwork on the part of the provider?***

**A:** It will require some extra documentation and paperwork. However, the MN QRS was developed so that providers do not sacrifice time with children for paperwork. Therefore, the rating will keep the amount of documentation and paperwork to a minimum.

***Q: How will parents access and use this information?***

**A:** The QRS provides an easy-to-understand snapshot of a program's quality to help parents select care and use the power of consumer choice to influence the child care marketplace.

States with quality rating systems provide parent information in many ways such as postings on websites, magazine articles, state hotlines, and through collaboration between child care licensing, Child Care Resource and Referral, school systems, Head Start and other organizations concerned with children's care and school readiness.

***Q: Where will funding come from to support the QRS?***

**A:** Many sources will be tapped to support the QRS and programs' improvement efforts. The Ready 4 K coalition and the Minnesota School Readiness Business Advisory Council are promoting a new public/private Minnesota Early Learning Fund which would provide resources for the QRS. Federal and State funds for provider training, quality improvements, and parent information could also be re-focused to support the QRS.

***Q: How many states have a quality rating system?***

**A:** Thirty-six (36) states recognize and reward child care providers for reaching higher levels of quality. In 21 states, more than two levels of quality are recognized.



# Minnesota Quality Rating System for Child Care and Early Learning and School-Age Care Programs

## Planning Overview

Children who attend high-quality care and early learning and school age care programs attain higher levels of school achievement. Unfortunately, too few private market programs currently reach high levels of quality, and as a result, many children are not gaining the development and early learning foundation they need to thrive in school. Children who start out behind in kindergarten are more likely to stay behind. For children attending child care, boosting child success requires boosting program quality.

Nationally, sixteen states use multi-level, research-based quality rating systems to measure and provide focused support and accountability for program quality. These systems develop and market quality rating indicators to help parents identify higher quality when they are selecting care and learning programs for their children. This allows parents to use consumer demand to encourage market supply of quality programs. Many states also use improvement grants, performance bonuses and other supports for providers to encourage participation in and to raise program quality through their voluntary quality rating systems.

Ready 4 K ([www.ready4k.org](http://www.ready4k.org)), the Child Care Financing Project, and the Minnesota School Readiness Business Advisory Council have called for a voluntary system of measuring the quality of child care and early learning and school age programs linked to children's readiness for school. These groups have joined forces with other business leaders, child care and early learning and school age providers, Head Start and tribal child care programs, government officials, and concerned citizens, to explore ways to accomplish this goal.

In response, a task force was formed in September, 2004 to develop a plan for a voluntary quality rating system. Ready 4 K and the Child Care Financing Project, working closely with DHS staff, are facilitating the public planning process for this citizens' initiative.

### **Public Planning Process for a Quality Rating System**

***Step 1: Ready 4 K and the Child Care Financing Project are facilitating a task force to develop a quality rating system proposal for Minnesota's care and education programs.***

*(Timeline: September, 2004 – February, 2005)*

The quality rating system proposal will be developed by a combination of care and education practitioners, including representation from child care centers, family child care homes, and school age care providers. Other important stakeholders from the care and education community will also be engaged in the task force, including provider organizations, child care resource & referral agencies, state agencies and counties.

**For more information, go to the Ready 4 K website: [www.ready4k.org](http://www.ready4k.org) - and click on *Quality Rating System***

---

\* The Minnesota School Readiness Business Advisory Council is a coalition of business leaders interested in the school readiness of young children. Ready 4 K ([www.ready4k.org](http://www.ready4k.org)) is a citizen initiative working statewide to increase awareness about school readiness and to develop support for a public policy agenda that will increase the number of children who enter kindergarten eager to learn and ready for school success. The Child Care Financing Project of the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association (GMDCA) is developing ways to reform financing for early childhood care and education so that all families have access to quality programs that are well financed.

**Step 2: *The Quality Rating System Task Force will seek public input throughout the planning process. (Timeline: November, 2004 – May, 2005)***

Providers, parents, early childhood and school age organizations, child care resource and referral agencies and other members of the public are encouraged to provide input for the QRS during the planning process. A QRS Draft Plan will be available in mid-March, 2005 for public comment. Written comments may be provided by sending an e-mail to [qualityratingsystem@ready4K.org](mailto:qualityratingsystem@ready4K.org). If you are interested in receiving a copy of the QRS Draft Plan, please send your contact information to the email address above.

**Step 3: *The Quality Rating System Task Force will obtain endorsement from a broad range of organizations for the final QRS Plan. (Timeline: June, 2005)***

The task force will use the public feedback on the QRS Draft Plan to develop a final QRS Plan. We will seek endorsement of the QRS Plan from a broad range of organizations with statewide representation. The final QRS Plan will include a demonstration period and plans for phasing in the system statewide, the entity to administer the system and the supports, funding structures, and evaluation methods.

Groups that will be approached to endorse the plan include organizations representing business leaders, child care & early learning providers, child care resource and referral agencies, family support, higher education, K-12 education, and state departments.

**Step 4: *The final QRS Plan will be used to seek funding and other support for implementing a demonstration phase of the Quality Rating System. The demonstration results will be used to phase in the QRS statewide. (Timeline: Demonstration Phase - July, 2005 -July 2007)***

The MN QRS will provide a mechanism for focusing both public and private funding, support and accountability on building and maintaining the supply of quality choices of child care and early learning and schoolage programming for Minnesota's families.

**Minnesota Quality Rating System Mission, Guiding Principles and Plan Components**

In its initial meetings, the Quality Rating System Task Force has agreed upon the following:

**Mission**

The Minnesota Quality Rating System will provide families with information about quality early care and education and school-age care programs. The quality rating system will identify, recognize and reward programs, providers and teachers who actively participate and succeed in preparing children for school success.

**Guiding Principles**

1. ***All Kids Ready for Kindergarten:*** Support parents in their role as their child's first teacher and provide incentives to programs and providers to increase the quality of early care and education and school age care programs so that children are ready for school.
2. ***Empower Parents:*** Provide consumer information for parents to better distinguish a range of quality programs and settings.
3. ***Fair Access:*** Create a system where all parents have the resources to access quality programs and settings.

4. ***Pathways and Incentives for All Programs and Practitioners to Achieve Quality:*** Provide professional development training and program improvement grants to help programs and practitioners move to higher levels of quality, and provide incentive bonuses to reward success.
5. ***Quality Workforce:*** Build on the strengths of our workforce by promoting the training and education of early learning and school age care practitioners, thereby improving the overall quality of care.
6. ***Voluntary Participation:*** Child care centers, family child care homes and school age care programs will not be mandated to participate in the quality rating system. It will not be a requirement of state licensing.
7. ***Increased Resources Linked to Accountability:*** Promote accountability for child outcomes and program outcomes and work for increased private and public investments in early childhood education.

### **Plan Components**

The ***Minnesota Quality Rating System*** is voluntary, and is being developed for any licensed Rule 3 child care center and preschool, any Rule 2 licensed family child care provider and any legally unlicensed school age care program that chooses to participate. The final plan will include specific guidelines for each level, program assessment and monitoring linked to child outcomes, technical assistance for programs and practitioners, improvement grants and incentive rewards, and parent consumer information.

#### ***The Quality Rating System:***

- Will provide various "levels" of achievement for different types of licensed child care, e.g., levels for child care centers, family child care homes, and school age care programs.
- Must be research based and linked to child outcomes.
- Will be a useful (clear, concise, easy to understand) consumer education tool for parents.
- Will build on the foundations already laid in Minnesota through the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress and the Minnesota Department of Education School Readiness Assessment regarding what young children should be able to know and do.
- Levels and indicators will align with early childhood and school age care program standards supported by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Education; nationally and state recognized accreditation criteria and the Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.
- When possible, the quality rating system will draw on already collected data, e.g., licensing history, program/practitioner data collected by CCR&Rs, etc.
- Will include technical assistance for providers to make improvements and to achieve high standards.
- Will include financial incentives for providers to improve and financial rewards for reaching higher levels of quality.

Ready 4 K is also supporting a companion effort for developing best practices for legally unlicensed family, friend and neighbor caregivers. Family, friend and neighbor caregivers will be invited to use the best practices that are being developed.

**For more information, go to the Ready 4 K website: [www.ready4k.org](http://www.ready4k.org) and click on Quality Rating System. Leave comments or questions at: [qualityratingsystem@ready4k.org](mailto:qualityratingsystem@ready4k.org)**

## Minnesota Quality Rating System Task Force - September, 2004 – June, 2005 Membership List

Name	Organization/Affiliation	Workgroup
Tammy Anderson	Children's Corner Learning Center	Centers
Bob Benes	Lakes and Pines Head Start	Infrastructure
Nancy Berndt	Scott County Child Care Licensing	Infrastructure
Sameerah Bilal-Roby	Early Childhood Resource & Training Center (ECRTC)	Infrastructure
Sarah Burks	Family Child Care Provider	Family Child Care
Deb Colling	Professional Learning Alternatives, Inc.	Family Child Care
Nancy Dougherty	MN School Age Care Alliance	School Age Care
Chad Dunkley	New Horizon/MCCA	Centers (co-chair)
Tamie Finn	MN Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care (MNTRECC)	Centers
Deb Fitzwater-Dewey	MN Association for the Education of Young Children (MNAEYC)	Infrastructure
Patty Finstad	University of MN Child Care Center	Centers
Karen Fogolin	MN Child Care Resource & Referral Network	Infrastructure (co-chair)
Tracy Frederick	Early Childhood Resource and Training Center (ECRTC)	Infrastructure
Nancy Jost	West Central Initiative	Infrastructure
Jane Kretzmann	Bush Foundation	Infrastructure
Matthew Majeski	Olmstead County Child Care Licensing	Family Child Care
Sue Molstad	Resources for Child Caring	Family Child Care (co-chair)
Beth Mork	MN Licensed Family Child Care Association	Family Child Care (co-chair)
Bryan Nelson	MN Assoc for the Education of Young Children (MNAEYC)	Infrastructure (co-chair)
Charlotte Nitardy	Metropolitan State University, Early Childhood Program	Family Child Care
Cindy Pic	Tri-Valley Opportunity Council CCR&R	Infrastructure
Brian Siverson-Hall	MNSACA	School Age Care
Cheryl Smoot	MN Dept of Health	Infrastructure
Mary Szlaius	Woodview Terrace Montessori	Centers
Mary Terrass	New Horizon	Centers (co-chair)
Michelle Thole	MN Licensed Family Child Care Association	Infrastructure
Lisa Walker	MN School Age Care Alliance	School Age Care
Katie Williams	YWCA Child Care Programs	Centers

### Task Force Staff

Name	Organization/Affiliation
Zoe Nicholie	Ready 4 K
Nancy Johnson	Child Care Financing Project