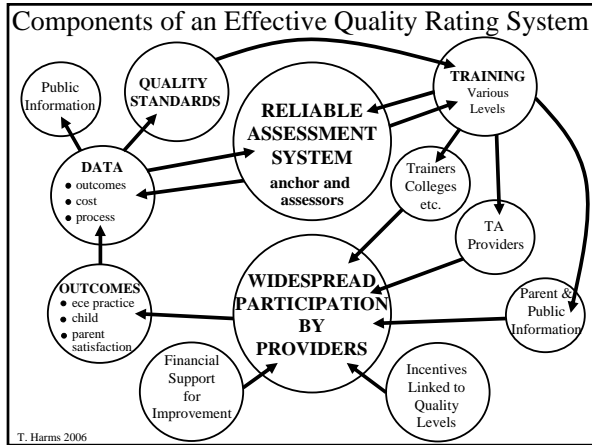



Meeting the Challenges of Implementing a Quality Rating System

Thelma Harms
FPG Child Development Institute
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



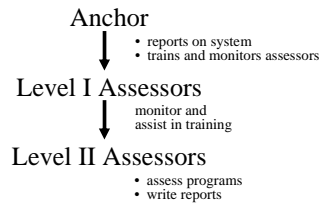


Quality Rating Systems Face 3 Major Challenges

1. Accountability
2. Ensuring Widespread Provider Participation
3. Providing Significant Outreach and Support

I. Accountability

I a. Establishing and Maintaining a Credible System



I b. Assessor Requirements

- Reliable use of assessment instruments
- Good report writing skills
- Free of conflict of interest
- Professional conduct

I c. Conducting a Valid Assessment

1. Announced vs. unannounced visits
 2. Number of classrooms randomly selected in a center
- Length of observation in classroom/ fcc home
 - Minimum number of children present

I d. Parity of Quality

- Center based and Family Child Care Homes
- Half day and Full day
- Programs for different age/ability groups
- Relationships among various quality assessment systems (eg. scales and accreditation)

II. Ensuring Widespread Provider Participation

II a. How and when providers enter the system

- Mandatory vs. Voluntary process quality assessment
- Support and Incentives

II b. Setting Quality Level Requirements

- Expectations: balance desire for dramatic improvement and realistic incremental steps
- Counteracting provider and owner reluctance

II c. Provider Self-Assessment

- Value and limitations
- Adequate training required before self-assessment
- Verification of a selected sample of self-assessments by trained observers

II d. Increasing Parent Demand for Quality

- Vigorous public information campaign
- Posted information of program quality
- Parent incentives

III. Effective Outreach and Support

- III a. Involve all key resources serving early childhood educators: licensing, higher education, technical assistance, professional organizations, funding streams
- Set short term and long range goals for improvement
 - Use QRS data long range to recalibrate requirements of licensing and additional levels of quality

III b. Provide Appropriate Training on Instruments for Different Levels of Accuracy:

- Create a common context among all potential sources of training/TA
- Include licensing staff, teacher trainers (2 & 4 year college), R & R agency staff, mentors
- Provide training of various intensities and duration for providers and classroom teachers

III c. Provide Various Levels of Training through for-credit and non-credit courses and workshops.

1. **Introductory** (lecture/activities only) *½ - 1 day*
2. **Basic Training** (lecture/activities PLUS 1 or 2 guided practice observation with debriefing) *3 days*
3. **Enhanced Training** (lecture/activities PLUS more guided practice observations with debriefing) *5 days*
4. **Training to Reliability** (Enhanced PLUS training to target reliability: 85% including report writing for assessors; 75-80% for trainers/TA)
5. **In-Depth Training** (only for people who have completed at least level 2) includes interpretation, corrective action plans, TA and training use *8-10 days*

III d. Provide Financial Support to Help Providers Implement Suggested Changes

- Small grants based on assessment requirements
- Low interest loans based on assessment requirements
- Tiered reimbursement based on assessed quality level
- Bonus payments to centers and homes based on assessed quality level
