Silver State Stars: Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)

Program Evaluation

Progress report for activities completed January, 2019 – March, 2019

During this Year 10 reporting period, the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) participated in QRIS program staff meetings and the QRIS strategic planning meeting, reviewed the QSTAR Data Dictionary, and analyzed the type and frequency of services provided to sites prior to coaching.

PROCESS EVALUATION PROGRESS

There were no QRIS Introduction Forms uploaded into QSTAR for this reporting period. Table 1 reflects the total number of QRIS introductions held and the number of centers/family child care providers that attended them through the current reporting period.

Table 1. Introductions: July 1, 2012 – March 31, 2019

	South	North	Total
Number of Introductions Held	42	32	74
Number of Centers/Family Child Care Providers Attending	233	188	421

According to the Coaching and Rating Period Dates Report in QSTAR, to date, 272 centers/family child care providers have submitted an application for coaching or a Silver State Stars QRIS enrollment form. Almost one-third of centers/family child care providers are in Maintenance and approximately one-fourth are Participating but Not Rated. The current status of all of the centers/family child care providers can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Center status of those centers/family child care providers that have submitted an application for coaching or an enrollment form

	Center	Family Child Care	Overall
Wait Listed	10.3% (26)	0.0% (0)	10.4% (26)
Participating but Not Rated	19.4% (49)	0.0% (0)	24.5% (49)
Maintenance	30.6% (77)	15.0% (3)	30.1% (80)
Inactive	3.6% (9)	30.0% (6)	4.1% (15)
Dropped	7.5% (19)	15.0% (3)	8.2% (22)
Closed	8.3% (21)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (21)
Initial Coaching	20.2% (51)	40.0% (8)	15.6% (59)
Total	100% (252)	100% (20)	100% (272)

According to the Coaching and Rating Period Dates Report in QSTAR, to date, 148 centers/family child care providers have been assigned a star rating. Of these 148 centers/family child care providers, 80

were listed in QSTAR with the status of Maintenance and 58 were listed with the status of Initial Coaching. The status of eight of the 148 centers/family child care providers was listed as Closed, one was listed as Dropped, and one was listed as Inactive. The number and percentage of centers/family child care providers receiving each star level, for the 138 with the status of Maintenance or Initial Coaching, can be seen in Table 3 below. In addition, the number at each rating period is provided within each star rating.

Table 3. Number and percentage of centers/family child care providers currently at each star rating (n = 138)

Star Rating		Number (n = 138)	Percentage
One Star		**15**	**10.9%**
	Initial Coaching	9	
	Maintenance 1	3	
	Maintenance 2	3	
Two Stars		**72**	**52.2%**
	Initial Coaching	40	
	Maintenance 1	17	
	Maintenance 2	10	
	Maintenance 3	5	
Three Stars		**18**	**13.0%**
	Initial Coaching	2	
	Maintenance 1	7	
	Maintenance 2	4	
	Maintenance 3	5	
Four Stars		**21**	**15.2%**
	Initial Coaching	5	
	Maintenance 1	3	
	Maintenance 2	6	
	Maintenance 3	7	
Five Stars		**12**	**8.7%**
	Initial Coaching	2	
	Maintenance 1	4	
	Maintenance 2	4	
	Maintenance 3	2	

To date, NICRP has received or located in QSTAR pre- and post-coaching ERS assessments for 110 centers. As seen in Figure 1 below, on average, there has been an increase in the ERS subscale scores post-coaching as compared to pre-coaching. The largest increase in scores was for the Program Structure (+1.27) and Activities (+1.21) subscales. The smallest increase in scores was for the Personal Care Routines subscale (+.61).

Figure 1. Average ERS Subscale Scores Pre- and Post-Coaching (n = 110)
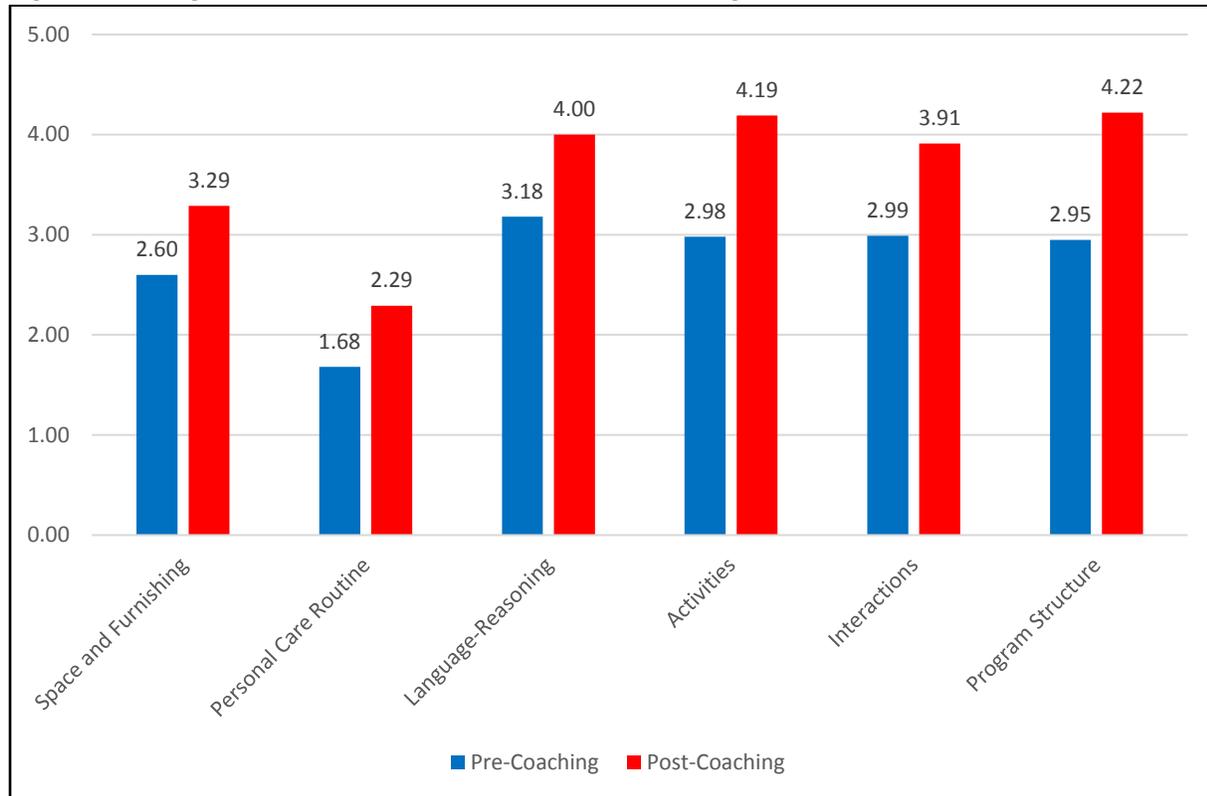
OUTCOME EVALUATION PROGRESS

To ensure that there was enough power to detect differences between the outcomes of children that attend higher quality rated centers (4 or 5 stars) and the outcomes of children that attend lower quality rated centers (2 stars), NICRP planned to assess 50 children that attend higher quality rated centers and 50 children that attend lower quality rated centers. To be included in the outcome evaluation, children had to have attended a 2, 4, or 5 star center part-time (at least 20 hours per week) for the past year or full-time for the past six months. NICRP has assessed 55 children that attended higher quality rated centers and 50 children that attended lower quality rated centers.

In addition, NICRP proposed to conduct a small study to determine if dosage was a factor in child outcomes. For this smaller study, NICRP proposed conducting assessments with 25 children that had attended higher quality rated centers less than 20 hours a week for the past year and comparing their outcomes to those of 25 children that attended higher quality rated centers more than 20 hours per week. To carry out this smaller study examining dosage, NICRP still needs to recruit and assess an additional 11 children from higher rated centers that have attended less than part-time for the past year. Two higher rated centers recently agreed to participate in the study and recruitment will begin in April.

<u>**STEPS to STARS**</u>

ERS Training Outcomes

Since the last reporting period, NICRP has not received any pre-tests or post-tests from the ERS Training. Therefore, no updates are provided regarding training outcomes.
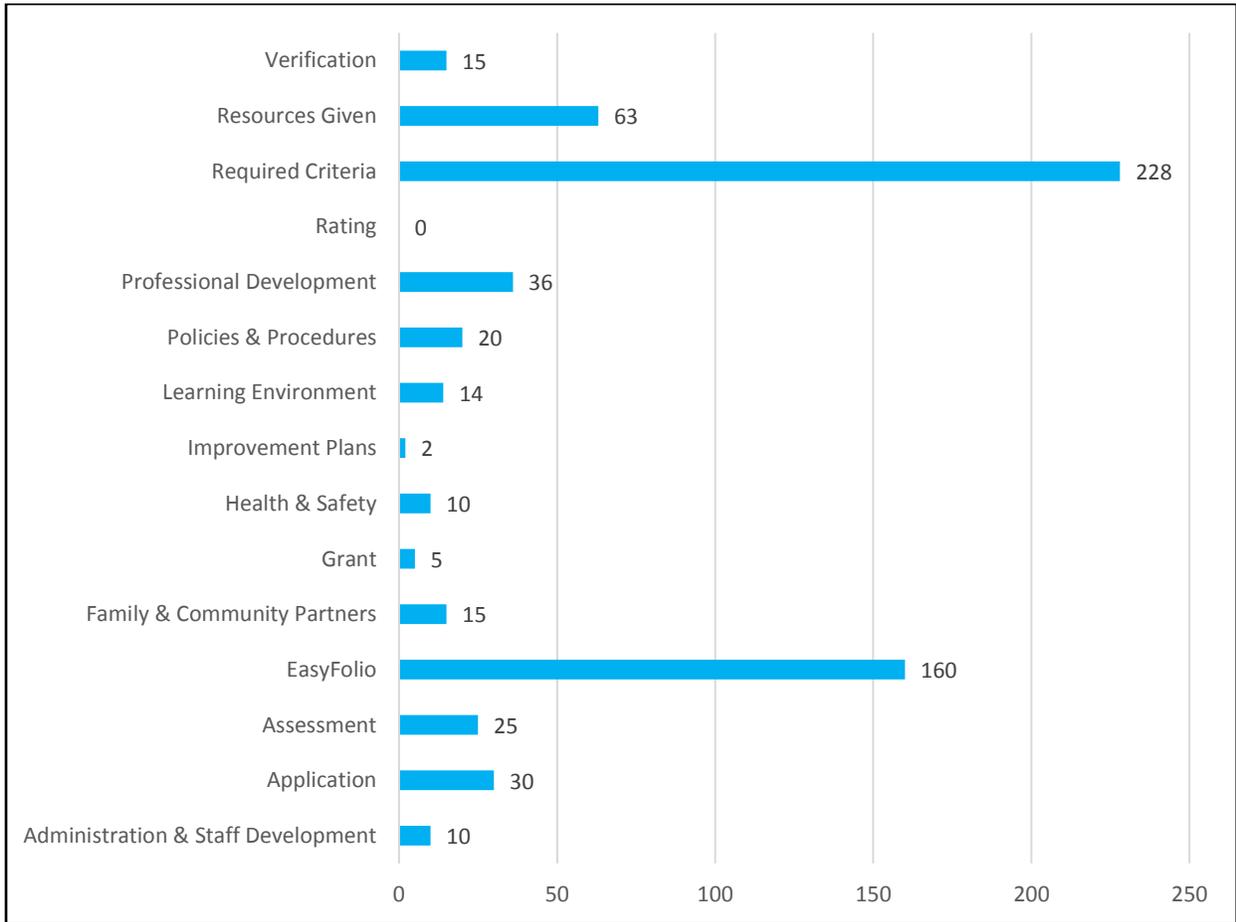
ERS Training Satisfaction

Since the last reporting period, NICRP has not received any ERS Training satisfaction surveys. Therefore, no updates are provided regarding satisfaction with the training.

Review of Services Provided to Sites Prior to ERS Assessment

Sites enrolled in Steps to Stars are not eligible for coaching until after they have received an ERS assessment and assigned a star rating. Prior to being assessed and assigned a star rating, sites are expected to receive only administrative services from a coaching coordinator or OELD staff. Using the TA Effort Report in QSTAR, NICRP determined which services Steps to Stars sites received prior to being assessed for their star rating. Specifically, NICRP identified how many times each of the activity topics in the report was selected for center and family based sites between their enrollment date and the date of their application to be assessed. Only sites that submitted an application to be assessed within six months and ten days of their enrollment date were included in the analysis (n = 35). Those sites with an application to be assessed date more than six months and ten days after their enrollment date were not included in the analysis because NICRP could not verify that these sites had not participated in any coaching. Eleven sites were excluded from the analysis for this reason, with application to be assessed dates falling six months and eleven days to six months and 120 days past their enrollment date with an average application to be assessed date occurring six months and 49 days after their enrollment date. As seen below, the activity topic of services provided most frequently to Steps to Stars sites during this window included "Required Criteria" and "EasyFolio".

Figure 3. Frequency of services provided to Steps to Stars sites prior to being assessed by activity topic (n = 35)

Activity Topic	Frequency
Verification	15
Resources Given	63
Required Criteria	228
Rating	0
Professional Development	36
Policies & Procedures	20
Learning Environment	14
Improvement Plans	2
Health & Safety	10
Grant	5
Family & Community Partners	15
EasyFolio	160
Assessment	25
Application	30
Administration & Staff Development	10

Based on TA Effort Report downloaded from QSTAR on February 25, 2019.

Steps to Stars Survey

Due to a low response rate to the six month Steps to Stars Survey last quarter (19.2%), NICRP broke the survey down into a Steps to Stars Part I Survey and a Steps to Stars Part II Survey. The Steps to Stars Part I Survey includes questions about the Steps to Stars process from the QRIS Introduction Training to the Pre-Program Self-Reflection Exercise. It is sent to QRIS Steps to Stars site contacts after they complete the ERS Training. The Steps to Stars Part II Survey includes questions about the Steps to Stars process from the ERS Training to application submission. It is sent to QRIS Steps to Stars site contacts after submitting their Application to be Assessed. It is hoped that the response rate will increase as a result of breaking the survey down into these two smaller surveys.

During the transition of implementing the new shorter surveys, it was necessary for some sites to receive the larger original survey because they had completed the first six months of the Steps to Stars process and had not been surveyed on the processes covered by the Part I Survey. During this reporting period, NICRP emailed a link to the larger original Steps to Stars Survey to 14 site contacts that had

recently completed the first six months of the Steps to Stars process. Of these 14 site contacts, eight completed the survey for a survey response rate of 57.1%. During this reporting period, NICRP also emailed a link to the Part I Survey to nine site contacts and emailed a link to the Part II Survey to two site contacts. Three site contacts completed the Part I Survey for a completion rate of 33.3% and two site contacts completed the Part II Survey for a completion rate of 100%.

The combined results from the thirteen completed surveys are provided in the sections that follow. Because not every survey respondent was asked about each of the Steps to Stars processes, the results are broken down by Steps to Stars process and include the number of respondents for each process.

QRIS Introduction Training – Eleven respondents completed the survey items related to the QRIS Introduction Training. As seen in Table 4 below, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all of the survey items regarding the QRIS Introduction Training suggesting an overall positive experience with the training. There were two items with which all of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed: "Those conducting the QRIS Introduction were knowledgeable" and "The quality indicator review exercise conducted during the QRIS Introduction Training was helpful." In contrast, only 81.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the training was helpful in determining whether or not their program was ready to proceed with the QRIS process and that they knew what step to take next to continue participating in QRIS.

Table 4. Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with each QRIS Introduction Training survey item (n = 11)

Survey item	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
The QRIS Introduction Training was well organized.	90.9%
Those conducting the QRIS Introduction Training were knowledgeable.	100%
The QRIS Introduction Training clearly outlined the star rating process.	90.9%
The quality indicator review exercise conducted during the QRIS Introduction Training was helpful.	100%
Any questions that I had during the QRIS Introduction Training were adequately answered.	90.9%
The QRIS Introduction Training was helpful in determining whether or not my program was ready to proceed with the QRIS process.	81.8%
When I left the QRIS Introduction Training, I knew what step I needed to take next to continue participating in QRIS.	81.8%

When asked to rate the QRIS Introduction Training overall, 36.4% of respondents indicated that the training was average, 27.3% indicated that it was above average, and 36.4% indicated that it was excellent. No respondents indicated that the training was poor or below average.

When asked, three respondents reported that the most helpful part of the training was the review of the quality indicators and "what was needed to meet them." Other respondents reported that the most helpful part of the training was the explanation of the star ratings, learning what QRIS considers "quality care", and "going over the book." When asked what improvements could be made to the training, two respondents suggested that attendees be provided with a description of each of the activities or deliverables they need to complete for QRIS along with concrete due dates and times for each based on when their site begins the process. One respondent did not provide a suggestion for improvement but stated that the training covered too much information and was too long.

Coaching Coordinator – Ten survey respondents completed the survey items related to the Coaching Coordinator. Among these ten respondents, most (60.0%) were contacted by a Coaching Coordinator less than a week after submitting their Silver State Stars Application online, two (20.0%) were contacted within two weeks, one (10.0%) was contacted after more than two weeks, and one respondent (10.0%) did not remember when they were contacted. As seen in Table 5, of those respondents that indicated being contacted by a Coaching Coordinator, all of them agreed or strongly agreed with all of the survey items regarding the Coaching Coordinator indicating a positive experience.

Table 5. Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with each Coaching Coordinator survey item (n = 10)

Survey item	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
The Coaching Coordinator is easily accessible.	100%
The Coaching Coordinator returns my phone calls/emails in a timely manner.	100%
The Coaching Coordinator adequately answers my questions.	100%
The Coaching Coordinator has been supportive of me/my program in the QRIS process so far.	100%
The Coaching Coordinator follows through on what they say they will do.	100%

When asked to rate their overall experience with the Coaching Coordinator, most (80.0%) rated the experience as excellent and 20.0% rated it as above average. No respondents rated the experience as average, below average, or poor.

When asked how the Coaching Coordinator has been the most helpful, two respondents mentioned the help they received with uploading documentation into EasyFolio. A few respondents reported that they appreciated that their Coaching Coordinator is easily accessible and available to answer their questions and explain the program. The Coaching Coordinators were described as "very nice and friendly" and caring "deeply about children and quality care" and "the providers and their process." When asked how the Coaching Coordinator could improve, only one respondent provided a suggestion which was to provide the sites with "a sample of a contract that will help us write our own." When asked to provide additional comments about the Coaching Coordinator, the respondents offered them praise by

reporting that they had done an excellent job, that they are very friendly, truly care about the work that they do, and are an asset to the program.

EasyFolio – Ten survey respondents completed the survey items regarding EasyFolio. As seen in Table 6 below, there was some variability in how easy or difficult EasyFolio is for respondents to use. Realizing that some respondents might be more comfortable or familiar with technology than others, NICRP reviewed the "very difficult" responses and found that it was the same respondent providing this response to the survey items. This might suggest that this respondent is not very comfortable or familiar with technology however, this same respondent indicated that using EasyFolio overall was "easy".

Table 6. The degree of difficulty that respondents had in completing tasks in EasyFolio (n = 10)

Survey item	Very Easy	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult
Logging in to EasyFolio	70.0% (7)	10.0 (1)	20.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Uploading your child care license into EasyFolio*	33.3% (3)	22.2% (2)	33.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)
Uploading your child care subsidy agreement into EasyFolio	30.0% (3)	10.0% (1)	50.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	10.0% (1)
Using EasyFolio overall	30.0% (3)	20.0% (2)	50.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
*One survey respondent indicated "Does not apply" for this item. Therefore, the total number of respondents for this item is nine.					

When asked to rate their overall experience with EasyFolio, 60.0% rated it as average, 30.0% rated it as excellent, and 10.0% rated it as above average. No respondents rated it as below average or poor.

When asked to provide comments about EasyFolio, two respondents indicated that uploading documents into EasyFolio is time consuming with one reporting that there are "too many steps involved to upload a file." One of these respondents reported using a cell phone to take photos of documents for uploading and that it "has taken up much of my phone memory and then I find that I accidentally delete something important while purging my phone of the hundreds of photos of documentation." Another respondent reported that on more than one occasion, documents would not show up in EasyFolio after being uploaded.

Pre-program self-reflection – Ten survey respondents completed the survey items related to the pre-program self-reflection. Five of these respondents indicated that they completed the pre-program self-reflection, three indicated that they did not complete it, and two respondents were not sure if they completed it or not. Of the five respondents that completed the pre-program self-reflection, two rated it as excellent, one rated it as above average, and two rated it as average.

When asked to provide comments about the pre-program self-reflection, one respondent reported that it was nice to see where their site was starting from and it gave them hope and a goal to work toward.

ERS Training – Nine survey respondents completed the survey items regarding the ERS Training. As seen in Table 7 below, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all of the survey items related to the ERS Training. All of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "The ERS Training provided me with a realistic expectation of what ERS scores my program could achieve." The survey item with which the smallest percentage of respondents agreed or strongly agreed was "The ERS Trainer adequately answered my questions."

Table 7. Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with each ERS Training survey item (n = 9)

Survey item	% Agree/Strongly Agree
Completing the pre-program self-reflection was helpful in understanding the ERS.*	87.5%
The ERS Training was well organized.	88.9%
The ERS Trainer was knowledgeable.	88.9%
The ERS Training helped me better understand how my program would be assessed using the ERS.	88.9%
The ERS Training provided me with a realistic expectation of what ERS scores my program could achieve.	100%
The ERS Trainer adequately answered my questions.	77.8%
*One survey respondent did not answer this question. Therefore, the total number of respondents for this item is eight.	

When asked, the respondents indicated that the most helpful part of the ERS Training was reviewing the indicators and the scoring and "having the book and going through each item and asking for clarifications." When asked what improvements could be made to the training, one respondent recommended that it be held "at a site that is technologically adequate" and has enough space for the attendees to be comfortable. Another respondent suggested that the checklist that they receive later on in the program be provided during this meeting, although it is not clear as to which checklist they are referring. When asked to provide any additional comments about the ERS Training, one respondent offered that the training might be more "meaningful" if photos or videos of their own classrooms were shared and discussed during the training. Another respondent noted that "this was the most frustrating class in my history of trainings" because the trainer was "texting her husband for help for the first hour" because of technological issues.

Post-program self-reflection – Nine survey respondents completed the survey items related to the post-program self-reflection. Five of these respondents indicated that they had completed the post-program self-reflection, one respondent indicated that they did not complete the post-program self-reflection,

and three indicated that they were not sure if they completed it or not. Of the five respondents that did complete it, one rated it as excellent, two rated it as above average, and two rated it as average.

When asked to provide comments about the post-program self-reflection exercise, one respondent indicated that they really liked the exercise because "it showed us a picture of where we were. "

Application submission – Nine survey respondents completed the survey items regarding application submission. As seen in Table 8 below, the majority of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with all of the positively stated survey items related to application submission. Only 22.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that completing the application to be assessed was burdensome.

Table 8. Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with each application submission survey item (n = 9)

Survey item	% Agree/Strongly Agree
The amount of time required to complete the application to be assessed was about what I expected.	88.9%
I felt prepared to complete the application to be assessed.	77.8%
In completing the application to be assessed, it was clear as to which types of documentation were needed to meet the requirements.	88.9%
Completing the application to be assessed was burdensome.	22.2%
Completing the application to be assessed was a valuable exercise for my program.*	75.0%
*One survey respondent did not answer this question. Therefore, the total number of respondents for this item is eight.	

When asked to rate their experience in completing the application to be assessed, 22.2% of respondents rated it as excellent, 11.1% rated it as above average, and 66.7% rated it as average. No respondents rated it as below average or poor.

When asked if they received a consultation with a Coaching Coordinator to review their application after submitting it, 44.4% reported "Yes", 22.2% reported "No", and 33.3% reported "I'm not sure." When asked to rate the helpfulness of the consultation, three of the four respondents that had a consultation rated it as very helpful and the other respondent rated it as not at all helpful.

When asked how the process of submitting an application to be assessed could be improved, one respondent expressed not liking Acrobat Reader and another indicated that the process could be improved by sites knowing the exact date that the application is due and when they are ready to start the process.

Steps to Stars overall – The final item of the survey asked respondents to share any comments about the Steps to Stars process that they did not have the opportunity to comment on during the survey. One

respondent expressed concern that the value of their experiences and accomplishments are not measured by the QRIS program. Another respondent reported that going through the QRIS program was very stressful, they should know when their coach is coming each month, classes should be available to "to take to get indicators", and samples of contracts should be provided. This respondent also indicated that they have had to make a lot of personal sacrifices to increase the quality of their program and that they do not feel as though their children or their family were respected during the process.

COACHING EVALUATION

During this project period, NICRP reviewed the QSTAR Data Dictionary and provided feedback to QRIS program staff to help improve its utility, especially for coaching staff. NICRP will continue to work with QRIS program staff and coaches to develop an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of coaching. Currently QRIS staff are working on a revised coaching strategy. Once that has been developed, NICRP staff will develop a plan to evaluate the coaching.

WORK TO BE COMPLETED

During the next quarter of the project, NICRP will work on the following activities:

- Attempt to recruit additional high rated centers in order to conduct 11 child assessments to determine the impact of dosage on outcomes
- Obtain feedback from programs as they progress through Step to Stars
- Obtain feedback from QRIS staff and coaches
- Prepare the annual report