The Program Quality Measure Development Project is creating a new measurement tool called the Early Childhood Quality Improvement Pathway System (EQuiPS). EQuiPS is intended to address critical aspects of program quality related to children’s developmental and learning outcomes and is specifically suited for use in a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS).

A Consortium, led by faculty from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and including collaborators in Delaware and Kentucky, is developing the EQuiPS to allow for a broader understanding and assessment of quality in early care and education programs than is captured with measures currently in use. Although the conceptualization of items and the measurement process has a foundation in children’s development and learning, both classroom and administrative practices known to promote optimal experiences for children and families are the focus of the measure. This approach is different in that current measurement approaches often emphasize the classroom as the unit of analysis with little attention to the programmatic systems that underlie classroom performance.
The Early Childhood Quality Improvement Pathway System (EQuIPS) is a review system of early childhood program performance and quality that provides a program portrait based on information from observations, document review, and interviews. This portrait can be used in varying ways within TQRIS and help identify pathways for programs to improve experiences for children and families.

EQuIPS is grounded in early learning and development standards, as well as current theory, research and recommended practices in the field of early childhood education, leading to a focus on practices that support important developmental outcomes valued across multiple states. Items span infant, toddler, and preschool age classrooms and will be relevant for the broad range of programs included in a TQRIS. EQuIPS is designed to take into consideration multiple sources of evidence from program administrators, teachers, and classrooms/homes, through multiple methods of data collection including program document review, interviews and observations. This comprehensive assessment will result in a program level portrait showing programs’ strengths and areas for improvement.

For more information about EQuIPS, go to http://earlylearningchallenge.nc.gov/activities/nc-star-rated-license-program-quality-measurement-development.

EQuIPS Components

Recommendations based on data analyses will lead to the refinement and streamlining of the current version of EQuIPS to allow for a comprehensive yet more efficient measure. The validation pilot study of the new measure will help inform and strengthen N.C.’s TQRIS system as well as those in other states.

For more information about EQuIPS, go to http://earlylearningchallenge.nc.gov/activities/nc-star-rated-license-program-quality-measurement-development.