



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Child Development and Early Education**

Pat McCrory  
Governor

Aldona Z. Wos, M.D.  
Ambassador (Ret.)  
Secretary DHHS

Robert W. Kindsvatter  
Director

February 16, 2015

Dear Early Care and Education Provider:

You may have heard that the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) has a Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RttT-ELC) grant to conduct a study of a new model for our Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The purpose of the study is to determine the strengths of the proposed model, the impact of the model on children and providers, and to inform potential future changes to our Star Rated License.

At the same time, North Carolina has been leading a consortium of states (also through an RttT-ELC grant) to develop a new tool to evaluate or measure the quality of early care and education (ECE) programs. The new tool will take a strengths-based approach to measuring the quality of children's experiences in ECE programs; give programs credit for the things they are doing well that are not captured by measures currently in use; and provide a clear pathway for program improvement. Testing of the new measure will follow the same timeline of the QRIS validation study and will be starting soon, and some programs that are invited to participate in the validation study will also be invited to participate in the study of the new measure.

We are writing to encourage you to consider participating in one or both studies, should your program be randomly selected to participate. DCDEE has contracted with researchers from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to conduct the QRIS validation study. They will be selecting and reaching out to programs (175 child care centers and 75 family child care homes) across the state, representing a mix of star levels, auspices, rural and urban locations, and ages served. Researchers at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) will be conducting the study of the new measure using a portion of FPG's sample. Participation in the studies is strictly voluntary, it will not impact your current licensing status, and DCDEE will not know if you decline to participate.

If you are invited to participate and accept, we will assign a technical assistance (TA) specialist from your Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) region to work with you over the late spring and summer of 2015 to understand and meet the requirements of the test QRIS model and the structure of the new measurement tool. Your TA will also collect any information you are willing to share about your own thoughts on the model/measure or particular requirements, suggestions for improvements to the

[www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov) • [www.ncchildcare.net](http://www.ncchildcare.net)  
Tel 919-527-6335 • Fax 919-715-0968

Location: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27603  
Mailing Address: 2201 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, NC 27699-2201  
An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer



model, etc. This information will be compiled and analyzed to help inform changes to the model/measure and/or program supports before recommendations are made to change the licensing system.

In the fall of 2015, a licensing representative from DCDEE will issue theoretical ratings to programs participating in this study. These ratings will not impact on your current license – they will only inform the study. Following the theoretical rating, FPG researchers will begin their assessments of participating programs in order to validate the test model of the QRIS, and UNCG researchers will begin testing the measure. The study results will be de-identified, so DCDEE will not know individual program results.

Additional information and details will be shared with programs as they are invited to participate. We hope you will seriously consider participating if you are invited to do so. We value your voice and perspective, and this is a good opportunity to make your voice heard as we test a new QRIS model and program quality measure.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Kindsvatter  
Director



Lucy Roberts  
RttT-ELC Director