



ALAMEDA COUNTY RTT-ELC SEPTEMBER 2012 STATUS UPDATE

In early January 2012, the California Department of Education Child Development Division (CDD) received a Race to the Top grant. This grant process was competitive and calls for states to take a comprehensive approach to developing integrated, high-quality learning systems especially for high need children. Alameda County is one of 16 counties engaged in the design of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). California is in the third cycle of states working on Early Education Systems.

Representatives from First 5 Alameda County and The Alameda County LCPC have been engaged in work sessions with the CDD and the 15 other counties that have developed a shared decision process to design a QRIS. This shared decision making process has three levels including: state, regional (Bay Area) and local (within the county). This document summarizes the work accomplished, thus far at the state level framing the regional and local work. The work is both broad and comprehensive and includes the following: agreement on common definitions, framing a block and hybrid model of rating, defining core categories and indicators of quality for scoring within each category and, ensuring that there is sufficient differentiation from one tier to the next.

The three components of this work that have been accomplished at the state level are:

- 1) A set of common definitions to ensure that there is a shared understanding of terms, indicators and framing.
- 2) Local action plans that build on regional (Bay Area) agreements to leverage resources and ensure efficiencies, and strengthens the work at the state level.
- 3) Hybrid and Block Matrix Frameworks that will be implemented and evaluated statewide and regionally that are comprised of the following core categories: Child Development and School Readiness, Teachers and Teaching, and Program and Environment. Within the core categories there are elements and indicators for each element. The Bay Area Region has chosen to use the Hybrid Matrix. There are five tiers that have been drafted, however some aspects of tiers 2 and 5 can be modified at the local level as necessary to meet local needs. Point values are assigned at the indicator level and cumulative scores comprise the rating for each program.

This work is important because there is a need to coordinate, build on linkages, strengthen partnerships, and ensure effective and accountable use of limited public resources. Ultimately, the process of building a QRIS will result in:

- a shared definition of quality based on reliable and validated research
- a comprehensive and consistent approach to assess quality services
- a design for the evaluation of such a system
- programs with access to a system that captures and supports quality improvement, especially for programs serving high need children and families,
- and consistent language and messaging for the parents and consumers of services that increases awareness and demand for quality early care and education.