

Quality in Early Learning Settings THE ROLE OF RATING AND IMPROVEMENTS SYSTEMS



13% of California's low-income children are in high quality early education programs.

WHY QUALITY MATTERS

The experiences that children have in their first years profoundly shape their ability to succeed in school and in life. Research shows that 90% of brain development occurs during the first five years of life. Children who have high quality early learning experiences:

- Have better critical thinking skills
- Cooperate and engage better with peers and teachers
- Do better in math and reading
- Enter kindergarten-ready
- Are more likely to graduate from high school

Despite the importance of the first five years, the vast majority of early education programs in California, and across the nation, are low quality. A RAND Institute study showed that only 13% of California's low-income children are in high quality early education programs.

HOW DOES A QRIS SUPPORT QUALITY?

California's **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)** is a systemic way to assess, rate, improve, and communicate about an early learning program's level of quality. Experts agree that certain practices in early education will ensure students are kindergarten ready when they enter elementary school. These practices include:

- Low teacher-to-child ratios
- High quality learning activities that focus on child development
- Safe, healthy, and engaging environments
- Health and child development supports, (including physical, social, and emotional development)
- Staff training, education, and ongoing professional development

Quality is measured and rated against these researched-based practices that are clearly laid out in the QRIS Matrix, so providers can easily learn how to improve and parents can assess what setting is best for their child.

HIGH QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCES HELP IMPROVE:



Critical thinking



Cooperation and engagement



Math & Reading



School readiness



High school graduation rates

First 5 leads the effort to build strong, effective and sustainable systems to serve young children in California. The First 5 Association of California is the membership organization for the 58 First 5 county commissions. In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10 — The California Children and Families Act — creating First 5 commissions in every county. First 5 supports the healthy development of children from birth through five years of age.

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THE ROLE OF RATING AND IMPROVEMENTS SYSTEMS (CONTINUED...)



QRIS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

There are currently 49 consortia, representing all 58 counties. Much of the QRIS activities are locally designed and driven by these consortia. Consortia are responsible for:

- Conducting quality ratings
- Communicating the quality of early learning programs to parents
- Coordinating and aligning early education training, consultation and professional development
- Continuously improving coordination systems across early care and education

CONSORTIA MEMBERS INCLUDE:

- First 5
- County Offices of Education
- Local School Districts (or LEAs)
- Higher Education
- Local Child Care Planning Council
- Local Resource & Referral Agency(ies)

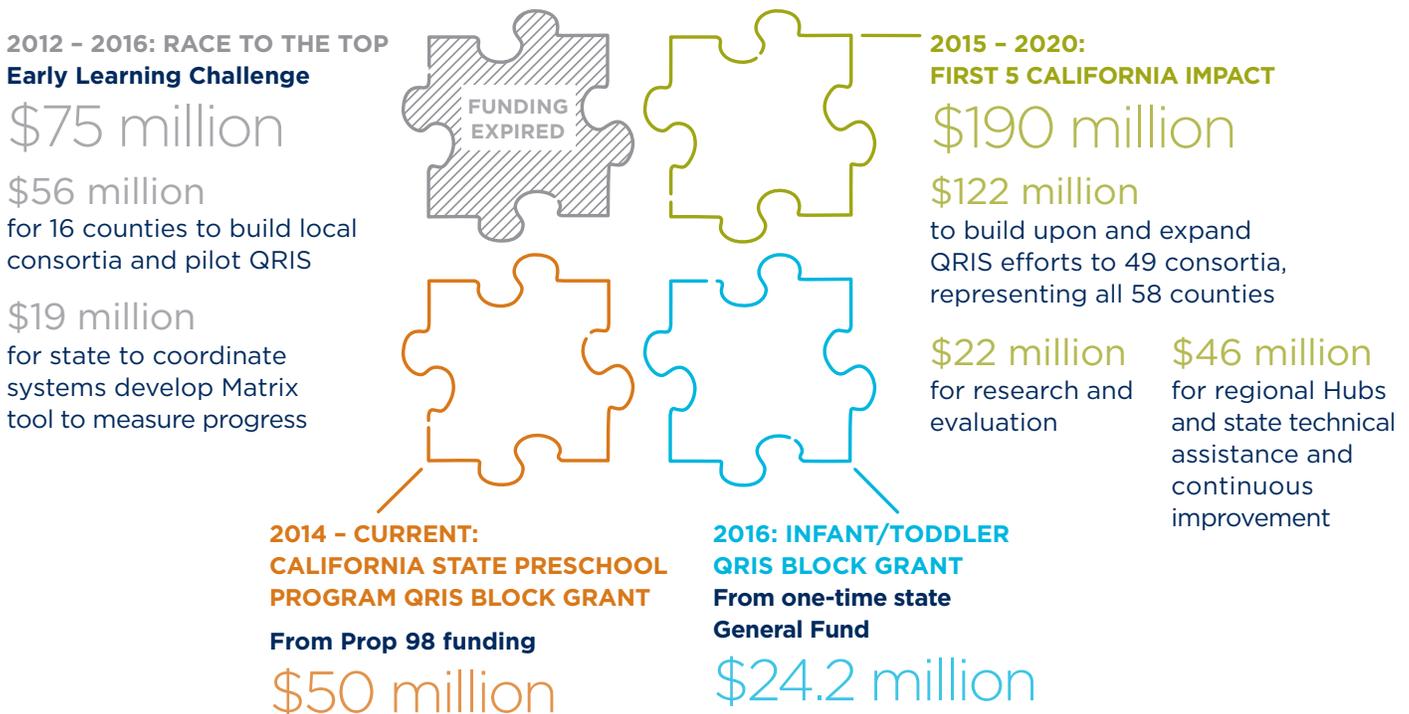
OTHER COMMON PARTNERS INCLUDE:

- State Preschools
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs
- Family Child Care
- Tribal Child Care

Despite all 58 counties being involved in QRIS efforts, there is currently no sustainable QRIS funding source beyond 2020.

FUNDING PIECES

QRIS is supported through an array of state and local funding streams, requiring consortia to braid and blend funding.



*Other funding streams include: California State Preschool Program, Head Start, Local Control Funding Formula, AB 212 Professional Development Stipends, Local First 5 funding, Child Care Development Block Grant, and Title 5.

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