

## WEBINAR SUMMARY

### MAY 2021

Step Up to Quality, Nebraska’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), was introduced in July of 2014. After researching a variety of QRIS models, we designed our program with elements successfully used by other states. Our guiding principle has always been “Continuous Quality Improvement,” not only for programs but also for ourselves. Internally our goal was to evaluate the system as it evolved, adjusting when necessary.

The Preschool Development Grant allowed us the opportunity to assemble a revision team of over 40 members, which included childcare center operators, family childcare providers, partner agency representatives, including Nebraska Children and Families Foundation; First Five Nebraska; The Buffett Institute; Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative; NeAEYC; Head Start; coaches; observers; public school and higher education representatives; our early learning coordinators; and coach consultants. This large and diverse group met monthly through 2019 and into the early months of 2020. Collectively, we agreed upon several improvements to the Step Up to Quality experience for participants, which in turn will improve services for children and families—our ultimate goal. [Proposed improvements](#) were developed based on the recommendations from the stakeholder group.

### PROPOSED STEP UP TO QUALITY 2.0 REVISIONS

We felt strongly that we needed to listen to the feedback from those who will be implementing the improvements. The recommendations from the revisions team were taken and presented in three live webinars in March and April of this year. Providers were able to gain insight and offer their feedback on the proposed Step Up to Quality 2.0 improvements.

Nearly 300 participants registered for these feedback opportunities. A recording was posted on the Step Up to Quality website for those unable to attend the webinars. A survey was made available to collect additional feedback regarding the proposed Step Up to Quality 2.0 Revisions, and 120 completed surveys were returned.

**Next steps will include analyzing the feedback and making necessary changes to the website, program resources and translating materials. The projected launch of Step Up to Quality 2.0 will be early 2022.**

### Key Insights



## Feedback and Survey Results

<p><b>Step 2</b></p>	<p>→ <b>The initial responses have been positive regarding the proposed changes, and are overwhelmingly supportive of the improvements to the Step 2 requirements.</b></p> <p>The most beneficial changes were reflected in the following order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced registration costs for ELG training for Step Up to Quality participants (97%)</li> <li>• Access to earlier virtual Technical Assistance and Coaching (94%)</li> <li>• Addition of the Special Care Training (94%)</li> <li>• Addition of the Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales and/or CLASS Introduction (88%)</li> <li>• Reducing the number of training hours (78%)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p>→ <b>70% responded it would be beneficial to offer a Step 3 only option as a good place to start (with no on-site ERS/CLASS observation).</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 Step 5</b></p> <p>→ <b>77% responded it would be helpful for programs to achieve a minimum score on either the Environment Rating Scale or CLASS observation to be rated at Step 4 or Step 5.</b></p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>→ <b>92% responded a separate Rating Request Form tailored to the type of program would be helpful.</b></p> <p>→ <b>96% responded adding credit for attending A Closer Look at the ERS training or the Whole-Body Classroom training would be beneficial.</b></p>	<p>→ <b>97% responded adding an indicator for participating in an additional quality initiative would be beneficial.</b></p> <p>→ <b>90% responded the additions to the Family Engagement Standard area were beneficial.</b></p>

## Additional Questions & Answers

<p><b>For existing Step Up to Quality participating programs who have achieved or surpassed Step 2, will the additional Special Care training requirement need to be completed?</b></p>	<p>→ No. Both Step 1 and Step 2 ratings do not expire. Programs who have achieved Step 2 within the existing system will not be required to attend the newly added Special Care training.</p>
<p><b>Is the Special Care training currently available?</b></p>	<p>→ Yes. The Special Care training can be found by searching the <a href="#">Early Childhood Training Calendar</a>.</p>
<p><b>Will points be adjusted since only one observation tool may be chosen? (ERS or CLASS)</b></p>	<p>→ Yes, points will be adjusted to reflect the new indicators. A minimum score for either the ERS or CLASS will be required for achievement of Step 4 or Step 5.</p>

<p><b>My program rating expiration date was extended by 12 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When will my re-rating take place?</b></p>	<p>→ All programs must submit a request for re-rating. Currently the Rating Readiness Tool is available on the Step Up to Quality website. The revised Rating Request Form will be available once the Step Up to Quality 2.0 roll out occurs in early 2022.</p>
<p><b>For programs who were rated on the current Step Up to Quality process, will they be re-rated on the new process?</b></p>	<p>→ That depends. If a program submits for a re-rating prior to the Step Up to Quality 2.0 roll out, they would be rated with the current process in place. If the request is received after the Step Up to Quality 2.0 roll out, the program will be evaluated using the new process.</p>
<p><b>My program does not currently have access or does not qualify for other regional quality initiatives. How will I access credit for that option?</b></p>	<p>→ We realize that no program will have the ability to earn credit for every indicator. Step Up to Quality has always been and will continue to be a menu of quality indicators. Programs may select those indicators that apply to their program. Points are not subtracted from programs; points can only be awarded. The rating has been based on a range of points, and in the new Step Up to Quality 2.0 system this will continue for programs pursuing a Step 3 rating. For programs pursuing a Step 4 or Step 5 rating, a minimum number of points will be required, plus a minimum observation score based on the Environment Rating Scale Observation or the CLASS Observation.</p>

## More Questions?

We'd be happy to provide further clarification or insights. Please email us at [nde.stepuptoquality@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.stepuptoquality@nebraska.gov) or [visit our website](#) for more information.