

Marin Quality Counts Participant Guidelines 2021-2022

Marin Quality Counts is a collaborative initiative promoting excellence in early care and education for programs, providers and families. Our work includes the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) in Marin County. QRIS systems are used across the country in order to improve and support the quality of early care and education programs. Numerous studies show that when children receive high quality care and education during their early years of life, they are better prepared for school, become better readers, and are more likely to graduate high school. These outcomes benefit every child and family in our community.

Depending upon the entry level in Marin Quality Counts, programs and providers will have access to:

- Local free professional learning opportunities
- On-site support, training, and coaching for quality improvement
- Incentives and stipends for quality improvement, professional growth and academic achievement
- An official CLASS and ERS assessment by a reliable external assessor (*Step Three QRIS*)
- Recognition and Awards (*Step Three QRIS*)

Participation Levels	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Meet with designated Marin Quality Counts staff for an orientation to determine your participating level, ask questions & sign participation agreements	YES	YES	YES
Complete an <u>Action Plan</u> with Marin Quality Counts staff in order to identify your program's participation goals.	YES	YES	YES
Request an Administrator Access Account on the ECE Workforce Registry and ensure that all staff have a complete portfolio on the Workforce Registry.	YES	YES	YES
Attend Professional Learning Opportunities through the Marin County Office of Education ECE Department and Marin Child Care Council. Workforce Registry ID numbers required for all events.	YES	YES	YES
If eligible for free coaching, contact coach to create annual schedule. Coaching is designed to support your program in implementation of knowledge and skills which support high quality learning environments.	N/A	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	COACH
California State Preschools Programs and previously rated programs are contacted regarding scheduling of CLASS and ERS assessments.	N/A	N/A	YES
California State Preschools Programs and previously rated programs prepare paper or electronic portfolio of required QRIS Rating documents – lead teacher and director transcripts, degree certificates or permits, professional development certificates, copy of ERS and CLASS assessments, copy of CLASS training certificate, etc. as required. Use your Site Portfolio Binder for guidance.	N/A	N/A	YES
California State Preschools Programs and previously rated programs are contacted to schedule the QRIS Rating visit. During this visit the QRIS Rater will review the Site Portfolio Binder, Children's Records, and visit classrooms in order to determine scores for each QRIS Element and a Site QRIS Rating will be generated according to QRIS guidelines.	N/A	N/A	YES
Complete surveys upon request, this includes Annual Data Surveys, Professional Learning Surveys and Coaching Surveys.	YES	YES	YES

Licensing Requirements for Level 3 (QRIS)

All participating sites' licenses must be current and "In Good Standing", which means a licensed child care center or family child care home currently does not have any of the following:

- 1) A non-compliance conference,
- 2) An administrative action taken or in the process of being taken,
- 3) A probationary license.

If a site's license is anything other than "In Good Standing", Marin Quality Counts rating will be suspended until corrections are made and the site is returned to "In Good Standing" by Community Care Licensing.

Site Ratings for Level 3 (QRIS):

Participating programs are assessed on the following elements of quality on the QRIS Matrix:

1. Child Observation
2. Developmental and Health Screenings
3. Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher/Family Child Care Home (FCCH)
4. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions, CLASS Assessments
5. Ratios and Group Size*
6. Program Environment Rating Scale
7. Director Qualifications*

* FCCHs are not assessed for ratios/group size or director qualifications.

Rating Cycles for Level 3 (QRIS):

Marin Quality Counts assessments occur annually between October-February; and the rating process occurs between February-April with ratings and awards posted in the following May-June. Marin Quality Counts staff work with all Marin Quality Counts participants and help each site determine their readiness for rating. Rating capacity is limited and the selection of sites to be rated during each cycle is made by Marin Quality Counts staff, based on timelines and availability of funding.

Marin Specific Protocols (Also see the QCC Implementation Guide):

- Prior to rating both the site and the QRIS Scheduler will agree upon the month that the rating is to occur (in accordance to the rating cycle/per grant deadlines).
- The exact date of the Rating visit will be unannounced but within the agreed upon month.
- A calendar or schedule for the month will be provided to the Marin Quality Counts Rater for the purpose of planning the rating visit around known "unusual" events (i.e. field trips, special events).

Rating Visit for Level 3 (QRIS):

Marin Quality Counts employs a monitoring and verification system with programs reporting elements of quality, and receiving an on-site review by the rater every three to five years. Two children's files from each classroom are randomly selected for review of child assessments and screenings by the Rater during rating visits (if the child has been in the program less than 60 days, another file may be selected). Every child should have evidence of screening and assessment, or a parent "opt-out" form, or detailed documentation of repeated attempts to obtain parental consent.

Marin Specific Protocols (Also see the QCC Implementation Guide):

- The date of the rating will establish the date for subsequent monitoring visits, i.e. if the rating occurs on October 30th, that is the date from which all monitoring will be established.
- If the head teacher is not present in the classroom (due to an unplanned circumstance, such as illness), the Rater will continue the rating visit and return (unannounced) *once* to confirm the head teacher’s presence and role in the classroom prior to completion of rating.
- If your Rater discovers something missing or incomplete, they will ask you about it. If a document cannot be located and it is needed for the rating in the Tier which you self-assessed, then your Rater will ask for alternative evidence if that is possible. Otherwise, the rating will be based on the evidence and documentation at hand.
- There will be a limit of one agency or monitor initiated re-rating per 5-year cycle. The cost of re-rating will be the site/agency responsibility.

Use of Existing Assessments for Level 3 (QRIS):

An existing ERS and/or CLASS assessment may be accepted in lieu of Marin Quality Counts sending an assessor if the assessment was:

- completed within 13 months of the rating
- performed by a valid and reliable external assessor
- conducted with the same Lead Teacher, child age group, and physical location as the selected classroom

After Rating is Complete (Level 3 QRIS only):

- Participating Marin Quality Counts programs will continue to have access to Marin Quality Counts staff for any needed technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, and coaching in order to further support the program’s quality and documented Quality Action Plan.
- A program’s Marin Quality Counts QRIS rating is valid for three to five years depending upon Rating Tier. Tiers 1,2 and 3 will be rated in three years and Tiers 4 and 5 will be rated in five years. Programs must continue to meet the quality indicators in-between rating periods. Designated Marin Quality Counts staff will conduct monitoring visits in order to ensure that the program continues to meet all the requirements of their particular rating.
- At the end of the three-five year period, the program will be reassessed in both ERS and CLASS, and receive a new rating visit to be rated for the next three-five year period (awards will be determined on a yearly basis as funds are available).

Re-Rating & Monitoring Policies (Level 3 QRIS only):

Re-rating in-between regular rating periods can be triggered by: (1) Significant turnover in staff; (2) New Director; (3) Changes that warrant re-assessment of an individual classroom; (4) Significant licensing violation (Type A); (5) Changes to a site license, such as change of physical location, change in status or other licensing changes; (6) Other evidence of changes related to the criteria upon which they were rated; (7) Other reasons determined by Marin Quality Counts Consortia (*The QCC Implementation Guide, p. 9*). The ECE program/provider is responsible for the cost of re-rating. There are no awards for re-rating in between rating periods.

Re-Rating Policies Specific to Marin:

If a program chooses to request a re-rating (once they have received their official initial rating), they must:

1. Contact Marin Quality Counts to request a “Re-Rating Application”.
2. Complete and return the “Re-Rating Application after a period of 6 months from the date of their initial rating. The application is based on criteria from the rater’s “Road Map” and the CA-QRIS Matrix used for the rating.
3. Re-rating expenses, including the rater’s time, and other assessments as required, will be the responsibility of the program requesting the re-rating.

4. Re-rated programs will not be eligible for the CSPP Block Grant High Tier Award or other High Tier Site Awards
5. After re-rating, the new rating will be reflected in the Marin Quality Counts database

Monitoring Policies Specific to Marin:

1. The initial Marin Quality Counts monitor site visit takes place 6-12 months after the original rating month.
2. Sites will be aware of the month of the visit, but the visits are unannounced.
3. The monitor visit will be based on the evidence and documentation at hand.
4. If monitor review is consistent with the rating review, the next monitor visit will be in 6-12 months.
 - a. If the monitor sees issues that are inconsistent with the rating or raise concerns that are in the “yellow flag” category, the agency will be notified to identify the problem and request remedy with a follow up visit in 3 months.
 - b. If there is a “red flag” issue, the sites rating will immediately become inactive and the agency will be notified. If the site requests an opportunity to be re-rated, the burden of the rating expenses will be on the site. The previously mentioned re-rating application process will apply and the burden of the rating expenses will be on the site.

Yellow Flag Indicators: *Decreasing one level from current rating on a Rating Matrix Element*

Red Flag Indicators: *Licensing Violations, Health & Safety concerns, or Decreasing two or more levels from current rating on a Rating Matrix Element*

Re-Rating projected costs to the program requesting a Re-Rating:

- *Environmental Rating Scales Assessment: \$650 per classroom being assessed. Includes Scoring Sheet with narrative*
- *CLASS Observation: \$450 per classroom being observed. Includes Narrative with scores and Protocols.*
- *Rater: \$300 per site*

Materials and Awards:

Materials and Awards are to be determined, depending on number of participants and funds available, and may change from year to year.

- **Level 1, 2 and 3:** Eligible Marin Quality Counts participants may apply for incentives and stipends for permit attainment, permit upgrades, professional learning and/or towards academic degree completion as funding is available.
- **Level 3 (QRIS):** Sites rated at the overall level of “Mastering High Quality Standards or Exceeding High Quality Standards” will receive recognition and award. Awards are intended to be used to maintain a site’s high quality rating e.g., *keeping ratios low, paying for qualified staff, supporting strong teacher-child interactions, and maintaining a quality program.* Providers are encouraged to incentivize staff retention (bonuses, stipends) or hire substitutes for in-service days or ASQ/DRDP completion, or to provide professional development or coursework reimbursement.
- **Reporting:** Marin Quality Counts participants are required to complete a report for Marin Quality Counts detailing how funds were spent. Due by September 1st annually. Reporting forms are mailed and emailed with Site Rating and Awards, and can also be found on the Marin Quality Counts website through Marin County Office of Education.

Marin Quality Counts Contact Information: marinqualitycounts@marinschools.org

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