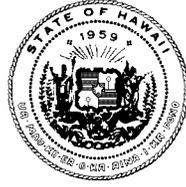


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**State Pilots a Quality Rating and Improvement System for Early Care and Education Programs**

HONOLULU – The Hawai‘i Department of Human Services (DHS) has launched a pilot program that implements a comprehensive assessment and improvement system for licensed center-based and home-based early childhood care and education programs. The Quality Rating and Improvement System or QRIS, is designed to increase the quality of early child care and education programs.

“The goals of QRIS are continuous quality improvement and increasing consumer awareness of early childhood programs,” said DHS Administrator Pankaj Bhanot. “With QRIS, we will be better able to identify strengths and weaknesses in these programs. This will help us share best practices and determine if resources such as coaching, professional development, and financial supports are needed.”

The QRIS pilot program will increase program staff competencies, assess and assure on-going professional development, increase family engagement and community knowledge about quality programming, increase access to quality programs, and improve learning opportunities and experiences for children attending licensed early child care and education programs. QRIS uses valid and reliable assessment instruments, standardized assessment processes, and trained professionals to assess the level of quality in early child care and education programs. It also provides resources for licensed center-based and home-based early childhood care and education programs to support quality improvement efforts. The current FY 2012 contract is \$560,876.

QRIS is administered by the University of Hawai‘i Center on the Family (COF) and is the result of collaborative planning and funding by several organizations, including DHS, COF, Hawai‘i Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC), Honolulu Community College (HCC), People Attentive to Children (PATCH), Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education (P-20), Early Learning Council (ELC), and the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation.

The QRIS pilot program was launched in February 2012, with nine center-based programs and 10 Family Child Care programs across the state. This small-scale pilot implementation will help determine where modifications can be made to improve effectiveness. The pilot runs through June 2013 with the possibility of a 6- to 12-month extension, contingent upon the availability of funding. Since mid-2011, 25 states have implemented a statewide QRIS.

For more information about QRIS, visit: <http://hawaii.gov/dhs/dhs/self-sufficiency/childcare>

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