



Monthly Report - December 2015

Dear Early Learning Council Members,

Happy New Year! The RTT-ELC monthly report to wrap up 2015 can be found below. As we enter the no-cost extension year for the RTT-ELC grant, the report will be compiled quarterly and be redesigned to reflect the work in the grant's no-cost extension year. Look for the next report in March 2016. Can't wait that long to hear from us? Stay connected by liking us on [Facebook](#) or following us on [Twitter](#).

Sincerely,
Melissa Emidy
Grant Officer RTT-ELC

RTT-ELC Project Updates

- [Overall grant management](#)
- [Program quality improvement](#)
- [Program standards alignment](#)
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OVERALL GRANT MANAGEMENT:

The final draft of the sustainability report was completed by the sustainability team in November. The participating agency directors met on November 17 and approved the report and highlights were presented to the Council at the December meeting. The final budget proposal was sent to the Governor's office for consideration in the FY17 budget at the end of December. The report will be posted to the [Exceed website](#) by the end of January.

Kidscount hosted a screening of "Are We Crazy About Our Kids", a part of the Raising of America series, on December 2 to engage with local stakeholders on the importance of funding early childhood education. After the screening, the Commissioner of Education, the Director of the Department of Human Services and Director of the Department of Health engaged in a conversation about the film and their thoughts on Rhode Island's focus on early childhood education.

As we enter the no-cost extension year, our staff is reduced. We thank the following individuals for all of their work on this project and wish them well in future endeavors: Erica Mandeville, Vanessa Samuelson, Nancy Cotoia, Holly Rodriguez, and Maria Velasquez,

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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS:

Quality Awards ended in December of 2015. On average, Quality Awards reach providers serving over 2,000 CCAP children each month. A total of \$ 1,192,871 in Quality Awards has been distributed as of November 2015. Final payments will be made in January to programs eligible for Quality Awards in December. Programs will need to complete their final reports by March 2016.

The Center for Early Learning Professionals continues to offer technical assistance across all domains of the early care and education field. Their collaboration with BrightStars has allowed for an enhanced level of coordination with a focus on quality-improvement and Rhode Island's quality continuum.

The Department of Human Services has mailed \$180,000 in checks to Rising Star programs. Programs that applied by December 15 will be eligible to receive awards until all funds designated to this project are expended.

In 2015, 110 programs were re-rated in BrightStars. Of the 110 program, the overwhelming majority of 59% increasing by at least one level. 35% remained the same, and only 6% decreased. There is a common misconception among providers that applying to have a program re-rated under the new standards will result in a decrease in quality rating. However, the data from the most recently re-rated programs actually shows that this could not be farther from the truth. We'd like to encourage all providers to join the 139 programs already in the queue and apply to be re-rated.

The Center for Early Learning Professionals is preparing to release the final wave of program quality improvement grants in January 2016. Check out [their website](#) for additional details.

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ESTABLISHING AND MEASURING TIERED QUALITY PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS:

Rhode Island's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application goal is 100% of all early care and education programs participating in the state's QRIS, BrightStars. As of December 31, the participation rates by star level are stated below.



BrightStars Rated Programs

	2016 Targets	Actual as of 12/31/16
1 Star	444 (50% of all programs)	414 (46.2%)
2 Star	177 (20% of all programs)	201 (22.6%)
3 Star	134 (15% of all programs)	53 (6%)
4 Star	71 (8% of all programs)	54 (6%)
5 Star	62 (7% of all programs)	16 (2%)
TOTAL	888	738
% OF GOAL	100% of all programs rated	83% of programs rated

DCYF continues work closely with the Department of Administration to complete an economic impact statement to fulfill the requirements for promulgation of the Family Child Care Regulations.

The validation study of the BrightStars 2013 frameworks is in progress. Recruitment concluded in September 2015. As more programs move up in the higher tiers, they will be invited to join in a part of the evaluation.

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USING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

Rhode Island continues to make progress in promoting the use of early learning and development standards. In partnership with HEALTH, RIDE began the review of RIELDS alignment to the Parents as Teachers Curriculum. In addition, at the most recent RIELDS trainer networking meeting in November the group reviewed and discussed the Child Trends evaluation findings.

Registration for Foundations for the RI Early Learning and Development Standards - Spring 2016 Hybrid Course has begun. This course is intended for individuals new to RI Early Learning and Development Standards. It serves as a pre-requisite for Family Child Care Providers, Teacher Assistants, Teachers, Administrators and other Early Childhood Professionals. For more information, [click here](#).

The Fun Family Activity project will award the next wave of Family Fun Activity mini-grants in January. More information will be released in early January. Check the [exceed website](#) in early 2016 for additional information.

Revisions to the Fun Family Activities parent and trainer modules are in progress. A survey has been distributed to the network and a focus group will meet in December. We will be revising the modules based on feedback this January and February. A Training of Facilitators will be held in March using the new materials.

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DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT:

The policies and procedures for Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education screening, evaluation and eligibility are moving forward. Aligned professional development is in development and implementation will begin with a revised RIELDS Foundations course in January 2016. Development work around policies and procedures for formative assessment and federal outcomes reporting is in progress.

Applications for the first wave of Child Assessment Technology Grants through the Center for Early Learning Professional closed on December 15. Application information sessions were held in mid-November to support providers in the application process. The grants are intended to support high-quality child assessment practices in programs, including family child care homes that demonstrate the capacity to use technology-based child assessment in the classroom. Awards will be announced soon by the Center for Early Learning Professionals.

The Department of HEALTH is working with 21 pediatric practices to help increase the number of high-needs children between birth and 3 receiving developmental screenings. In December, the Department of Health extended evidence-based resources to support Incredible Years for high-risk children ages 3-5.

The teachers participating in the KEP pilot finished their work, submitting documentation for the final constructs and participating in follow-up interviews. The second round of piloting will begin in January, with a training scheduled to be held mid-month. In addition, four separate stakeholder engagement focus groups were held to solicit input from kindergarten teachers regarding supports needed to implement high-quality assessment, instruction, and curriculum practices. Over 40 kindergarten teachers participated in groups facilitated by the independent consultant who is also helping us to design our KEP implementation plan. An online community for kindergarten teachers is being developed in order to continue receiving feedback on the implementation plan and other kindergarten-related efforts.

The Department of Education will continue to offer the opportunity for programs to access Teaching Strategies Gold at a discounted rate. Programs interested accessing the discounted rate may contact [Judi Stevenson-Garcia](#).

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BUILDING AN EARLY LEARNING DATA SYSTEM:

The Early Care and Education Data System (ECEDS) soft-launched the Workforce Registry in late October. The Workforce Registry is a place for educators working in early care and school-age programs to electronically store their staff file, including information required by regulatory agencies and/or applications to BrightStars or CECE approval. Members of the workforce may create an account at exceed.ri.gov, simply by clicking the login button. Administrators can view and update their workforce registry by logging in to their existing account, verifying their personal information and then toggling to the workforce registry by clicking their name on the upper right corner. Rhode Island has identified a vendor to support the workforce with entering information into the workforce registry. Resources and supports will coincide with the official launch of the registry this spring.

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IMPROVING THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES OF THE WORKFORCE:

The Center for Early Learning Professionals winter 2016 professional development catalog is now available and classes will run from January through March. Be sure to register early; close to 400 individuals participated in the Center's PD this fall! More information can be found at center-elp.org.

The work to complete the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Administrators and Education Coordinators has resumed. National experts are reviewing the team's work and will send recommendations to the team in early February. We will then hold focus groups to garner feedback from the field.

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